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# Exploring the Survival Strategies of Black Unemployed Women without Access to Social Grants

by

**ZINZILE HAPPINESS RAMATSEBA**

**201326625**

Minor Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of Johannesburg, in fulfilment of the Degree of Masters of Arts in Social Impact Assessment (CW)



**SUPERVISOR:**

**PROFESSOR GRACE KHUNOU**

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**31 OCTOBER 2019**

# Declaration

Student Number: 201326625

I, Zinzile Happiness Ramatseba, declare that the research dissertation titled: **Exploring the Survival Strategies of Black Unemployed Women without Access to Social Grants** submitted in fulfilment of the degree of Masters of Arts in Social Impact Assessment (CW) at the University of Johannesburg is my own work. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university

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Signature

31 October 2019



## Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to give thank you to my biggest supporter, my pillar of strength, my best friend and my first true love, my mother. It is through your love that I am where I am today in life and I can only hope to be half the woman you are someday. I would also love to thank my other two best friends, my baby sisters: Thato and Tumzi Ramatseba. I do not know how I would do this life thing without you guys by my side. You guys are always there for me, most especially through all my complains and cries throughout this journey and for that I thank you. I hope that this will motivate you guys to continue to further your education and to never give up on your dreams no matter the obstacles.

I would also like to thank my housemates, who wormed their way into my life and heart, Tshego and Kea. You guys have made these past two years my most memorable years. I have learnt so much from you guys. Our dates really helped to keep me sane throughout this time. I would also like to thank the Monate Fun Times ladies who are always down for a good time whenever I needed a break from my masters. I would also like to thank my good friend Nomagugu, for always listening to me complain. To Portia, I would to thank you for your support as well, and all the proof reading and suggestions and explaining did. You are an amazing soul and deserve all the good coming your way. I would like to give a big thanks to Lorenzo, you have helped me a great deal, and you have been an amazing friend to me. I appreciate your friendship and the support you gave me and how you believed in me.

I would also like to extend a big thank you to Mabone, who always extended a word or two of advice and was always eager to assist me wherever he could. I special thanks to Phomolo, who always helped me by covering my shifts whenever I needed to meet a deadline, I am eternally grateful for your kindness. I would also like to thank Boni for always putting up with me as well as my colleagues. I would also like to thank Lesego, who helped me uncode our Supervisor writing and comments and for her continued words of encouragement and support. I would like to also extend my gratitude to my supervisor Professor Grace Khunou for her dedication and assistant in this journey. There are many more people who played various roles in this journey, who I have not mentioned, but I do thank you.

## Abstract

More than half of the youth between the ages of 18-25 years are either out of school or unemployed and living below the poverty line. The unemployed youth is not covered by the social assistance system as the Child Support Grant is received until age of 18, and other social security resources for youth are accessed through post-school skills development programmes like universities, colleges and other government subsidies skills development programmes. Therefore, it is clear that there is a gap for people between 18-25 when it comes to accessing social assistance, more especially for young Black women.

The intention of this study was to examine what happens to young Black women after the age of 18 when they suddenly have to exit the social security system. Most research has focused on mothers who are child grant recipients. Using a qualitative approach, the study aimed to explore how young unemployed black women between the ages of 18-25, without children and are previous beneficiaries of the social grant system are surviving financially without access to the social security system, higher education and wage work. The study made use of a qualitative approach and collected data through using the snowball method. Through this, the study interviewed ten participants and the Black feminist perspective was used as a theoretical framework. The experiences of the participants although somewhat similar differed and those experiences shaped what they thought to be survival strategies and how they went about surviving unemployment, amongst other social problems faced by young Black women in South Africa.

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## **Chapter 1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The constitution of South Africa states that, “Everyone has the right to have access to social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependents”, (Republic of South Africa 1996: Bill of Rights section 27). However, as will be shown in this study, when children who are on the Child Support Grant turn 18 years old, they are automatically taken off the system. This is done even if they are still registered in secondary school or whilst their financial standing in society has not changed. All of this brings into focus the burning question that was asked by Mosoetsa (2011), ‘how do the poor survive as poverty continues to deepen in contemporary South Africa?’ This study looked to expand on this question by exploring how specifically young Black women survive poverty in the context of unemployment without access to social security in the form of income security and other forms of protection.

For instance, studies have always seemed to assume that women and men are affected by social issues such as poverty, inequality and unemployment equally or experience them the same (Davies, McMullin, Avison and Cassidy 2001). It is because of such an assumption that policies have been designed as gender neutral. However, it is important to note that men and women do not experience race, gender, class and social issues the same. Men and women live structurally different lives (Davies et al., 2001).

Furthermore, women often tend to miss out on opportunities as they are mainly seen as caregivers. This is similar to how married women were previously not expected to be compensated for care giving work. This was seen in how the young participants in this study were expected to take on caregiving roles, as will be seen. They were expected to do house work because they are unemployed but were not compensated for it. In return, family members gave them money occasionally as a “reward”. It would seem that family members also do not make it easy for young Black women who are experiencing unemployment, financial insecurity, poverty as well as difficulties in furthering their education with their expectations. The following section will look at the background of the study. A problem statement has been provided, along with a rationale. This section has also covered the aims and objectives of the study.



Furthermore, this section has briefly described the research methodology and theoretical framework that was used for this study. Lastly, this section has provided a brief outline of what each of the chapter's entail.

## **1.2 Background**

In South Africa, poverty continues to be one of the biggest challenges faced by marginalised people, such as children and women (Patel 2005). According to Statistics South Africa (2018), just over 30 million South Africans were living in poverty in 2015, making it more than half of the country's citizens. These statistics clearly indicate the high rates of people living in poverty in South Africa and further speak to how big of a challenge poverty is for South Africa on a political, economic and social level. For instance, in 2015 the poorest 10% of households in South Africa earned under R10 000 a year whilst the richest 10% earned over R265 000 a year (Khadiagala, Mosoetsa, Pillay and Southall 2018).

Triegaardt (2006) describes poverty and inequality as always having co-existed for many generations and this is seen in both developed and developing countries. Triegaardt (2006) further describes inequality and poverty in South Africa as having spatial, gender, race and age dimensions. According to Albertyn (2011:141), "social inequalities result in patterns of inclusion and exclusion in which the identity, norms and behaviours of particular groups are stigmatised and or marginalised, while other groups' are affirmed and privileged". As a result, women have become increasingly vulnerable to physical, psychological and financial abuse in addition to being excluded from political participation. Black women are especially affected by poverty and unemployment due to their race and social class positioning (Albertyn 2011).

This is because poverty, inequality and unemployment are all intertwined, with one or the other leading to the other. Triegaardt (2006: 3) describes unemployment as a situation whereby persons between the ages of 15-65 are unemployed or do not own a business, but have made efforts to look for work or starting a business. Households that do not have any members who are employed are most likely to be living in poverty (Natrass 2002). This can be attributed to the fact that if there is no income in one's household, acquiring the basic necessities becomes a challenge as no one can afford to acquire them. In order for most of these households to survive, they often rely on one of the main social grants.

### 1.3 Problem Statement

The post-apartheid government has put in a place a number of strategies that are solely aimed at eradicating poverty in South Africa, one of these strategies is the provision of social grants. According to the Social Assistance Act of 2004, social grants aim to ensure that the citizens of South Africa are assisted when necessary and it includes the provision of financial assistance where needed to persons who are unable to provide for themselves (Government Printer 2009). However, during crisis, food and other necessities are not provided. South Africa provides social grants to over 17 million South Africans, which for a developing country can be seen as a well-established social welfare system (Government Printer 2009). The aim of social grants is to improve the standard and quality of life for those that are less fortunate or unable to meet their needs. Child Support Grants are provided to create an equal society through redistributing wealth (Patel 2005).

Statistics South Africa (2018) has shown that more than half of the youth between the ages of 19-25 years are either out of school or unemployed and living below the poverty line. Statistics South Africa (2018) states that more than 38,2% of the youth are unemployed. The social assistance system does not mitigate for youth unemployment as the Child Support Grant is received until age 18 and other social security resources for youth are accessed through post-school skills development programs like universities, colleges and other government subsidies skills development programs. Again, if one is between 19-25, the only other social grants they can access are the disability grant, the care dependency grant or foster care grant (Social Assistance Act, No.13 of 2004). Therefore, it is clear that for young people who are not disabled and are between the ages of 19-25, there is a gap when it comes to their access to social security, more so for young Black women.

### 1.4 Rationale

In South Africa, many studies have been done on youth unemployment (De Lannoy, Graham, Patel and Liebbrandt 2018). For instance, Dagume and Gyekye (2016) discuss the detriments of youth unemployment in South Africa. In the book *Class in Soweto* by Alexander, Ceruti, Motseke, Phadi and Wale (2013), they focus on unemployment and underemployment and the effects of these on communities and households. A study was also done by Dozier (2012) and focused on young Black

women and their experiences with economic downturns. However, there seems to be a lack of focus on studies that look at how young unskilled Black women survive unemployment along with poverty post-child grant access, more especially the experiences they face when seeking employment post-secondary school.

Furthermore, studies on survival strategies have focused on how married women experience unemployment and how they survive unpaid work (Muthwa 1994). Other studies have looked at race, space and power and how these contribute to the survival strategies of working poor women (Gilbert 1998). A study done on survival strategies focused on rural women in Qumba, Eastern Cape and how they survived poverty (Tshona 2008). Sishuba (2017) did a study on survival strategies of homeless women living on the streets with their children. This study looked at the various forms of strategies that homeless women used in order to survive. In 2006, Compion and Cook did a study that looked at how young Black women in Phokeng used transactional sex as a survival strategy in contemporary South Africa. Additionally, a study was done on surviving unemployment without state support (Klasen and Woolard 2009). From this review of available research, there is a clear knowledge gap in that it does not account or look into survival strategies, employed by young unemployed Black women post-social grant access. This is why this study aimed to look at the experiences and survival strategies of young Black women who are previous Child Support Grant beneficiaries, so as to understand how poverty, inequality and unemployment impact their lives.

Most research tends to focus on mothers who are beneficiaries of the Child Support Grant (Mudzingiri, Moyana and Mbengo 2016). There has also been research on whether there is a relationship between the Child Support Grant and increased teenage fertility (Makiwane, Desmond, Richter and Udjo 2006). Similarly, Wright, Neves, Ntshongwana and Noble (2015) look at the experiences of South African women accessing the Child Support Grant. Guthrie (2002) looked at family social security benefits in South Africa and how the Child Support Grant money has contributed to poverty eradication within poverty-stricken homes. Other studies have focused on how Child Support Grants in South Africa have contributed in gender relations in households in Soweto (Patel and Hochfeld 2011). Studies have looked at the relationship between social security, economic well-being and family context among child recipients (Tomborini and Cupito 2012). However, there have not been

many studies done that focus on the actual grant recipients and their experiences with the Child Support Grant.

Other studies focused on females over the age of 18 and their experiences in tertiary institutions, (Patel, 2005; Tshitshi and Mbatha 1992). It is clear that there is a knowledge gap concerning the experiences of young Black women who are unemployed, not in higher learning institutions or have access to the Child Support Grant as recipients or care givers. Because the government does not account for youth that are not considered to have a disability, it has resulted in a gap for social assistance provision, more especially for young Black women. There is a lack of research on the experiences of young Black women who are unemployed and not beneficiaries of the social security system either as child beneficiaries or as mothers claiming for their children.

### **1.5 Aims and Objectives**

This study aimed to explore and critically analyse the experiences of young unemployed Black women between the ages of 19-25, without children and who are previous beneficiaries of the Child Support Grant. The research question for this study was therefore: What are the survival strategies of young Black unemployed women without access to social security support post-child grant access?

In order to answer the above research question, the study was guided by the following objectives:

- Explore the experiences of young Black women who no longer have access to the child grant.
- Determine the coping mechanisms that young Black women use to deal with income insecurity.
- Recommend possible solutions on how social security can fill the gap in assisting and empowering young Black women to break the cycle of poverty.

### **1.6 Research Methodology**

The study took on a qualitative research approach. This approach complimented the theoretical framework and further allowed the researcher to interact with the participants on a personal level, and to acquire an in depth understanding of their

experiences. This approach also provided a platform for participants to share their experiences, without being held back. Ten young Black females between the ages of 19-25, from Daveyton in the East Rand of Johannesburg where interviewed. The study was conducted over a period of six months in the first half of 2019. These participants were all unemployed and were previous beneficiaries of the Child Support Grant and had no children of their own. The researcher followed the ethical considerations of the University of Johannesburg, throughout the entire study. This was done by ensuring the participants were provided with an information sheet and an informed consent form to read and sign before proceeding with the interview (see appendix A and B). The researcher used the thematic content analysis method to analyse the data once it was collected and transcribed.

### **1.7 Theoretical Framework: Black Feminist Approach**

The Black feminist approach was used as the theoretical lens for the study. According to Neuman (2011), the feminist approach is often conducted by feminist female researchers. These researchers make use of multiple research techniques with the aim of giving women a voice, which further allows women to narrate their own stories from their own perspectives (Neuman 2011). This approach assumes that the subjective experiences of women are different to those of men. This study looked to identify the experiences that young Black women were faced with after having been beneficiaries of the Child Support Grant, as well as how these young women experienced unemployment from a feminist perspective. Cooks and Fonow (1990) describe the purpose of feminist research as to empower women, and this is done by putting the women at the centre of research and placing emphasis on their experiences.

Black feminism was most appropriate for this study as it did not only focus on gender inequalities but looked at race and class (Neuman 2011). Black feminism believes that people have different experiences of gender based on their location within socially constructed cultural, political, as well as class contexts (Neuman 2011). According to Collins (2000) being Black and female exposes Black women to certain common experiences, which as a result may lead to women having different perspectives and experiences. Collins (2000) looks at Black feminism as a form of empowerment for women of colour as it provides a platform to share their thoughts and experiences as

they see fit. The Black feminist approach further allowed the researcher to put the experiences of Black women at the centre of the research, which in turn allowed the researcher to build from those experiences by providing possible mitigation strategies.

## **1.8 Definitions of Key Concepts**

### **Poverty**

In 2006, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), described poverty as a global multidimensional problem (UNDP 2006). This is because poverty is a human condition that reflects upon the failures of one's life through multiple dimensions, i.e. unemployment, inadequate food and shelter, illness, powerlessness and social injustices. Similar to this Ng, Farinda, Kan, Lim, and Ting (2013) also defined poverty as being a multi-facet phenomenon in today's globalised society. Poverty stems from various causes that lead to multiple effects on the world's economy and on people's quality of lives. "Poverty is a state of want or disadvantage, a state of deprivation which is subsequently qualified within a specific context to be associated with a lack of income and assets, physical weakness, isolation, vulnerability and powerlessness" (Chambers 1998:10). This definition clearly attests to poverty being multi-faceted, in the sense that poverty encompasses and is inclusive of a number of social issues.

For purposes of this study, Patel's (2005:240) conception of poverty will be used as it is the most compelling. Patel defines it as, "an interlocking and multidimensional phenomenon caused by a lack of multiple resources such as unemployment, food, housing, basic infrastructure, health and literacy". In simple terms, poverty is when people do not have access to equal opportunities. This can be seen as inequality, which tends to be a contributing factor to poverty in many poverty-stricken countries.

### **Gender Inequality**

Gender in this case does not refer to one's biological sex, rather it refers to the various roles, personality traits and cultural identities that people take on in society (McDermott and Hatemi 2011; Sjoberg 2010). Furthermore, gender can be defined through how masculinity and femininity are prescribed as Western dichotomies (Sjobeg 2010). What this means is that gender is a social construct that identifies the roles that humans are required to take on based on their biological sex. It is through these socially assigned roles that power is exercised and inequality exists.



Moletsane, Reddy, Ntombela, Dayal, Wiebesiek, Munthre, Kongolo and Masilela (2010) describe inequality as having featured in almost all levels of social structures within society. Gender inequality involves an understanding not only of power differences between men and women, but of how these power relations result in gender stratification within the larger institutions of society. Gender inequalities in economic life also become a causal factor in the chronic poverty of all household members, not just of women in poor households and the intergenerational reproduction of poverty (UNDP 1997: 39).

Unequal power relations have also contributed to poverty being a gender phenomenon. Sen (1997) stated that it is no coincidence that women find themselves being the poorest, as they have limited access to income, social and family support, as well as education (Chant, 2006; Kabeer, 2003). This would also explain why poverty tends to affect both women and children more. Studies also indicate that about 22.9% of the population with children in their households was poor in 2015 whilst the population living in households with about three children had a poverty rate of 76.3 % (World Bank, 2018).

### **Social Grants**

From the social security system stemmed the social grant system. This is administered by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), which has been mandated by the South African Social Security Agency Act of 2004. According to Khadiagala, Mosoetsa, Pillay and Southall, (2018), about 16 million people received some kind of grant in 2015. This would mean that about 40% of the poorest households rely on social grants as a source of income (Khadiagala et al., 2018). The goal for social grants is to ensure that people are able to make ends meet and to survive above the poverty rate (Patel, 2005).

Social grants also aim at providing social security which according to Patel (2005:123) is “the protection which society provides for its members through a series of public measures, against economic and social distress”. Social grants play a crucial role for a developing country such as South Africa in poverty reduction as it is targeted at individuals who are vulnerable to poverty and do not have other means to escape this cycle of poverty. The Constitution as previously mentioned makes the necessary

provision to provide social assistance to those persons considered vulnerable (Patel 2005).

### **1.9 Outline of Report**

In this research report, the reader can expect to find five chapters, namely the introduction, literature review, the methodology, a findings chapter, and lastly the conclusions chapter. Below is a brief breakdown on what the chapters will cover.

Chapter two of this study is the literature review which provides an overview of both international and local literature that exists on the social security system, poverty, family structures, and gender inequality and youth unemployment. Through looking at literature that exists, the researcher was able to acquire a better understanding of the survival strategies of young Black women in South Africa post-child grant access as well as their experiences before and after accessing the Child Support Grant. Lastly, the chapter looks at the Black feminist approach, which is the theoretical framework used in this study.

The third chapter highlights the research methodology. The chapter goes into detail as to why a qualitative research tool was used to conduct this study and how it was used. The chapter further explains how the research tool and theoretical framework tied in together. The sampling methods used to identify participants are also shared in this chapter. The processes of data collection and analysis are discussed here. This chapter takes a look at the research site as well. In this chapter one will find a very detailed reflexivity along with an audit trail that narrates the researcher's personal experiences and thoughts in regards to the journey leading to the completion of this research. Along with the ethical considerations taken into account for the study, one will find the strengths and limitations of the study.

Chapter four of this study provides a detailed discussion of the research findings. The chapter does this by providing a themed analysis of the experiences of Black women post-child grant access who are previous beneficiaries of the grant and are currently unemployed nor in a tertiary institution. The chapter looks at the experiences the participants had whilst they were beneficiaries of the child grant. This chapter also clearly indicates the various methods that the participants had to employ in order to survive and meet their basic needs. The participants all clearly had ambitions to further their education but either did not have the funds or means to do so or the necessary



qualifications. The participants also struggled to find employment because they did not have the skills required or money to get to possible places of employment. The chapter also takes a look into their family structures and dynamics and how these have contributed to their choice of survival strategies.

Chapter five of the study provides the summary of the chapters. It also provides possible recommendations based on the findings and opinions of the participants. These recommendations are based on current policies and possible changes to these policies in order to mitigate poverty, gender inequality and youth unemployment. The recommendations are also based on the findings of the study. Lastly, this chapter clearly and briefly concludes the argument and purpose of this study.



## **Chapter 2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The unemployment and poverty rates among the youth are high because they receive very little support that could enable them to transition from childhood to adulthood swiftly (Lin and Miyamoto 2012; Oosthuizen 2013; Ssewamala 2015). These high devastating rates of unemployment are due to lack of suitable jobs and education opportunities, which are a result of historical and persisting inequalities. These inequalities especially affect young Black women, who are vulnerable to poverty and unemployment as well as challenges accessing tertiary education once they complete their secondary education (Statistics South Africa, 2018; Branson, Hofmeyr, Needham and Papier 2015). It is therefore an unrealistic expectation for the youth to transition from one life stage to the other without any socio-economic support.

The aim of this chapter is to explore and discuss various literatures that discuss the survival strategies of young Black unemployed women in order to understand the experiences of the study participants. The chapter begins by defining and discussing poverty as well as the effects poverty has on young Black women in South Africa. Secondly, the chapter looks at literature on inequality and the link inequality has to poverty. Thereafter, the chapter discusses literature on youth unemployment in South Africa and further discusses how poverty, inequality and unemployment are intertwined. Furthermore, the chapter looks into literature on the social security system. This is done through the discussion of the Child Support Grant and identifying the purpose this grant serves towards poverty alleviation. The limitations of the social security system are also discussed. Lastly, the chapter discusses survival strategies that young Black women employ to combat life after social grant access. Before concluding the chapter, a detailed discussion of the theoretical framework is provided.

### **2.2 The fundamentals of poverty – in-depth narrative of the term**

The word poverty originates from the Latin word pauper which translates to poor (Westover 2008). Over the years, poverty has acquired various definitions and there have been many debates on which term best describes poverty. Moletsane et al. (2010) state that poverty has taken on different meanings for various scholars and policy makers, and by those directly affected by poverty. For instance, Laderchi, Saith

and Stewart (2003) identified four approaches in which poverty can be defined. These approaches attempt to measure personal deprivation based on monetary income, approaches based on capability failure which are assessed on being socially excluded as well as participatory methods that look to understand the views of the poor (Laderchi et al., 2003). Additionally, there are two types of poverty which are important for contextualising, namely absolute and relative poverty.

Absolute poverty can be defined as a “condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, which include food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information” (World Summit for Social Development 1995). Absolute poverty is when a household or individual is unable to meet their basic needs. Basic needs are considered to be the basic minimums needed to enjoy a basic standard of living. Sen (1984:335) argues that “poverty has an absolute core and needs to be viewed in absolute terms”. Therefore, absolute poverty can be seen as an “absolute notion in the space of capabilities”. This means the inability of an individual to meet those requirements necessary for them to partake in everyday societal activities, such as going to school. For instance, individuals living in poverty do not have the means to function adequately or successfully in society. This is because they struggle or do not have the means to acquire the basic services or needs such as food, shelter, healthcare and information (Patel 2015).

When defining poverty in its most extreme context, it can be seen as the lack of access to basic human needs needed to survive. These necessities would include access to adequate nutritious food, clothing, housing, health services and sanitation such as clean water (Korankye 2014). Poverty is seen as depriving people from their human dignity, as when one is unable to access opportunities, they are often found to have inadequate resources. Yunus (1994) also defined poverty as the denial of human rights in relation to fulfilling their basic human needs.

Aside from absolute poverty, there is relative poverty, which is defined as one’s income not matching that of their community members (ILO 2016). This therefore means that relative poverty refers to people who are seen as poverty stricken if their income is unable to meet that of the community. This means that they do not have what the community at large considers as the expected necessities to live a decent life. In other words, relative poverty is the comparison of the income of individuals and households.

It compares people to others around them (Iceland 2005). More so, it identifies the minimum amount of income that is considered to be socially acceptable for someone to live on and be accepted and included to participate in the community. In the context of this study, absolute or relative poverty will be identified through the experiences and financial standings of the participants. Although the participants are from the same township, it is important to take into consideration that they do not have the same income.

Often when individuals are unable to meet lifestyle standards that are expected within their particular communities, they are considered to be poor in comparison to those around them. Townsend, Gordon and Pantazis (2006) identified relative poverty as households and people who belong to a particular population as being in poverty when they lack resources to obtain the types of resources required, approved or encouraged in the societies they belong to.

### **2.2.1 Poverty and its relative descriptions in various facets of society**

According to Townsend et al., (2006), poverty has historically been linked to income, which is still the case today. People are said to be in poverty when they have no source of income and are unable to access the resources necessary to take on the roles that will enable them to meet obligations as well as to partake in everyday society (Townsend et al., 2006). Korankye (2014) gives a contrasting view from the above by stating that, poverty is when people that are affected by it have insufficient resources or income to make ends meet. The commonality between these descriptions shows that income is needed for people to participate in day to day activities and that poverty deprives the poor from being able to access opportunities that could enable them to escape the cycle of poverty (Cagatay 1998).

Cloete (2002) defines poverty as being a direct product of human social relationships. This means the way in which people value and distribute material things is dependent on or influenced by how segregated or integrated their relationships are. This further influences the structure of the economy. Therefore, poverty can be described as more than a lack of access to resources to meeting one's basic needs. Rather poverty is a symptom of power inequalities. As previously stated, poverty is not only encapsulated in one meeting their basic needs, but summarises the exclusion of (poor) people from

being actively involved in decision making process that will have a direct or indirect impact on their overall well-being (Patel 2005; Cloete 2002).

### **2.2.2 Exploring some of the impacts of poverty**

South Africa is considered to be one of the richest countries in Africa in terms of natural resources, yet the poorest of the poor in the world are also found there, with very little human growth and development (Korankye 2014). SIDA (2005) shows that poverty has various causes that can be seen as also being complex in nature. These complex causes can stem from a lack of access to information and knowledge, health related problems, inability to access public services and exercising human rights (Korankye 2014). This results in poor people not being able to access the required relevant skills and knowledge, personal development and education that can better their lives.

People who live in poverty are unable to participate in everyday activities as they do not have the resources required. For instance, if one does not have money to attend workshops or to apply to higher institutions, they are unable to participate in those activities that could possibly help alleviate poverty. Patel (2005) describes poverty as having psychological aspects that include humiliation and emotional strains. Poverty according to the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (2004) can be attributed to the inability of the poor to have an influence in social policy and its processes, lack of access to education, poor living standards, as well as the disadvantage and inequality women face in society. A lack of participation for citizens in decision making processes in social, cultural and political matters has also contributed a great deal in poverty. Patel (2005) discusses how important democracy and participation is in ensuring that people have a say in the social policy and any matter that will affect them both directly and indirectly.

Participation put simply is the process in which the people govern in policy through active involvement in the society and community. Participation places emphasis on the disadvantaged having a say in solutions that will solve the social injustices that they have experienced (Patel 2005). The above definitions clearly indicate how poor people are often unable to get involved and participate in decision making processes. De Haan (2000) and Sindzingre (2000) both attested to the fact that poverty can be caused by general exclusion of people from society.

The social and economic injustices of apartheid have also contributed to Black households being disrupted which can be seen in the family structures that exist within these households (Patel, Hochfeld, Ross, Chiba and Luck 2019). Households in this context refers to individuals who reside in one house and divide food and other basic needs required for survival (Statistics South Africa 2018). Patel (2009) describes this act as having been a direct impact of poverty, which forces people to combine their incomes and resources in order to survive. These households also share household chores and care responsibilities. Black children have also been found to spend a significant amount of time on household in comparison to other races (Posel and Rogan 2012). Additionally, a number of households are now made up of extended and mixed family members, where every two in three children live in (Posel and Rogan 2012). Furthermore, Black children are most likely to also grow up in households where they are raised by a lone parent. This simply put means that very few Black children get to grow up in households with present fathers (Posel and Rogan 2012).

Despite the fact that most lone parents tend to reside with extended family members they tend to be a lot more vulnerable to stress due to the challenges that arise from living in such family arrangements. These challenges include having to share a low income with family members, gender inequalities within the household and intergenerational hierarchies that exist (Patel 2015; Davids and Roman 2013). Black children who grow up in such poverty-stricken environments usually have very limited access to computers and books, as there are not enough funds within the household to cater to these needs for the children (Spaull 2015). This has resulted in the exclusion of young Black people from active participation in the economic, social and political spheres.

### **2.2.3 Several ways in which gender and inequality are linked to poverty**

Poverty has not always been identified from a gender-based perspective. Poverty according to Kabeer (1997) had always been seen as a general issue for both men and women. This was not until the definition and measurement of poverty was criticised by feminists as being gender blind (Chant 2008; Sweetman 2003; Razavi 1999; Jackson and Pearson 1998; Kabeer 1997). According to Moletsane et al., (2010), measuring poverty is the process of classifying people as being poor if they reside in households where the income per capita is below the predetermined

threshold. The measure is then what determines what is known as the poverty line which determines a population's lack of resources which include, food, shelter, education and health (Moletsane et al., 2010). Data from 2015 indicates that 27% of women lived below the poverty line as compared to 24% of men (Statistics South Africa 2017).

Gender in this case does not refer to one's biological sex, rather it refers to the various roles, personality traits and cultural identities that people take on in society (McDermott and Hatemi 2011; Sjoberg 2010). Furthermore, gender can be defined through how masculinity and femininity are prescribed as Western dichotomies (Sjobeg, 2010). This means that gender is a social construct that identifies the roles that humans are required to take on based on their biological sex. It is through these socially assigned roles that power is exercised and inequality exists. Women and men have been assigned roles and more often than not, the roles and expectations assigned to women have put them at a disadvantage.

According to the African National Congress (1994), poverty is described by the Reconstruction and Development Programme as being a direct consequence of the apartheid system that benefited certain groups whilst excluding other groups. Agreeing with this is Triegaardt (2006) and Patel (2005) who also state that poverty can be felt the most by people who are considered as vulnerable. Specifically, the poor in South Africa are Black, with Black women being even poorer and most vulnerable as compared to men (Labour Force Survey 2007). Furthermore, Black women find themselves being more vulnerable to poverty as the problems they face tend to be linked to economic, patriarchal as well as previous policies of the apartheid system (Tshitshi and Mbatha 1992). Tshitshi and Mbatha (1992) and Cagatay (1998) stated that when looking from a perspective of human poverty, women in most societies are poorer when looking at capabilities such as education, health and assets accumulated. There have been gender differences in how resources have been shared within communities and households between men and women (Moletsane, et al., 2010).

According to Statistics South Africa (2017), out of 56 million people, 30.4 million live in poverty, with 64.2% of those people being Black. Additionally, 13.8 million of the poor were living in extreme poverty (i.e. persons living under the food poverty line of R441 per person per month) (Statistics South Africa 2017). Tshitshi and Mbatha



(1992) and the Statistics South Africa Report (2017) indicated that Black women are the poorest of the poorest with 49.2% of them being poor. As a result of the increase in the rate of poverty between men and women over the last decade, poverty has become a gendered phenomenon in South Africa (Posal and Rogan 2012; Casale and Posel 2005).

### **2.2.3.1 How policies have promoted gender inequality**

Research has shown that although both men and women experience poverty in numerous ways, they however, experience poverty differently (Moletsane et al., 2010). Studies have further shown that poverty is more prevalent among females as opposed to males (World Bank 2018). This is because the process through which men and women become poor or vulnerable to poverty is different (Chant 2008; Jaquette and Summerfield 2006; Arriagada 2005; Kabeer 2003; Sen 2000; Razavi 1999). For instance, women tend to take on the role of caregivers in society and ultimately bear the consequences of poverty which also affects their dependents (Patel, Hochfeld and Moodley 2013). Studies show that childcare seemed to be a constraint to women's participation in the labour market. When asked what their reasons for not working were, 56% indicated "homemaking" as the reason (GOSA 2015). Women who are employed are usually found in the informal sector. These would include low skilled paying work and vulnerable forms of employment (Kirkwood 2018).

According to Statistics South Africa (2018), the informal sector is crucial in providing employment to those who are unable to seek work. 17.4% employment makes up the informal sector. Within this, women make up 47.6% as compared to the 30.6% of men in the informal sector (Statistics South Africa 2018). As a result, females end up taking on jobs that consist of temporary contracts or seasonal employment such as domestic work (ILO 2016). Linking unemployment further to inequality through a feminist perspective, one has to take into account female unemployment which is as much of a problem as youth unemployment. This is why the study focused on young Black women between the ages of 19-25years. Statistics South Africa (2018) reported that the unemployment rate of women was 29.5% compared to 25.3% of men in 2018.

According to Statistics South Africa, women accounted for 43,8% of total employment in the second quarter of 2018. Only 32% of managers in South Africa were women. This is a clear indication that women compared to men take up low skilled, low paying



and vulnerable forms of employment. For instance, 36% of women work in low skilled jobs compared to 25% of men (Kirkwood 2018). Due to the fact that women are mostly found in lower paying jobs, their access to secure assets is less (Kirkwood 2018). This attributes to the high rates of poverty that women seem to face as opposed to men, especially if these women are household heads (Kirkwood 2018).

It would seem that women are unlikely to partake in the labour force but when they do, they earn less wages and take on unskilled work. For instance, over 14% of Black women are employed as domestic workers, which makes a total of over 1 million women being domestic workers in South Africa (ILO 2016). Black women in 2018 dominated the Domestic worker and Clerk or Technician occupations, with men dominating the rest. Only 30% of Domestic worker jobs were occupied by men while 10, 9% of Craft and related trade jobs were occupied by women (Statistics South Africa 2017).

Women are more likely than men to be involved in unpaid work. In the second quarter of 2018, about 55,2% of those involved in non-market activities were women (Statistics South Africa 2018). For instance, women are still viewed as caregivers and often find themselves having to take on care work in households without any kind of financial compensation. Patel et al., (2013) describe the lack of public and private support for the care work women do as limiting them to access formal employment and other opportunities that could empower them together with their families. Care work can be defined as informal labour at home where one does not receive any pay for the work, and it is usually allocated to women (Patel et al., 2013).

According to Sullivan (1997), women in most communities dedicate most of their time to care work as opposed to men. Mosoetsa (2011) states that women are expected to perform most of these care work activities and as a result, they do not have ample time compared to men. This means that women are relatively poor in time as most of their work is not socially acknowledged as it is not paid (UNDP 1997). According to Cagatay (1998), women in most countries across the world often specialise in unpaid caring labour unlike men. This work would include taking care of children and adults both emotionally and physically. Hassim (2006) and Folbre (2008) discuss the importance of understanding the household care of economy in order to better

understand the extent to which women tend to be disadvantaged in terms of having equal and fair opportunities in competing in the formal labour market.

### **2.2.3.2 The case of uneven distribution of power**

Unequal power relations have also contributed in poverty being a gender phenomenon. Sen (1997) stated that it is no coincidence that women find themselves being the poorest, as they have limited access to income, social and family support, as well as education (Chant 2008; Kabeer 2003). This could also explain why poverty tends to affect women and children more. Studies also indicate that about 22.9% of the population with children in their households was poor in 2015 whilst the population living in households with about three children had a poverty rate of 76.3% (World Bank, 2018).

Moletsane et al., (2010) describe inequality as having featured in almost all levels of social structures within society. Gender inequality involves an understanding of not only power differences between men and women, but also of how these power relations result in gender stratification within the larger institutions of society. Gender inequalities in economic life also become a causal factor in the chronic poverty of all household members, not just of women in poor households and the intergenerational reproduction of poverty (UNDP 1997: 39). Kabeer (2003: 13) argues that gender inequality intersects with economic deprivation that results in deepened forms of poverty for women than men. Gender inequality can therefore be seen as being embedded in the contribution of creating and strengthening poverty. It is almost impossible to imagine any parts of society that do not include aspects of “gender” considering how it intersects in multiple and more often complex ways (Bills 2018).

South African women seem to face numerous constraints that prevent them from contributing fully to eradicating poverty. This is despite the strong representation women have in national politics and their high levels of enrolment in tertiary education (Kirkwood, 2018). The attainment of education has strong links with higher wealth, income and earnings (World Bank 2018). This explains why tertiary education is seen as the highest elasticity in net worth determination. More so, education has a huge impact on one’s net worth and even greater impact on income (World Bank 2018). Although studies show that women are usually most likely to enroll in tertiary

education, it is not all good news, especially if one is to focus on the qualification and subject courses chosen (Kirkwood 2018).

### **2.2.3.3 Gender, race and class**

Kon and Lackan (2008) speak to Albertyn (2011) how Black women are affected by their social class positioning. They state that the geographical locations of physical infrastructures such as health care facilities and schools tend to be inadequate in areas where large numbers of Black individuals reside. South Africa inherited extreme inequality from the Apartheid system, which continues to increase. The same applies to the current health system which was inherited from the apartheid system, where poor quality services were provided to Black individuals and communities, whilst White people received better public services (Kon and Lackan 2008). Although it has been over 20 years since the end of apartheid, inequality in accessing services still exists between races and genders. It is clear that women, more especially Black women are at a disadvantage and are faced with multiple obstacles when trying to escape poverty. Even more, it is without a doubt that inequality is influenced by gender, race and space. It is for such reasons that the Black feminist perspective was a suitable approach for the study. It allowed the researcher to acquire an understanding of the experiences Black women face from Black women themselves.

### **2.3 How inequality and unemployment feed from each other**

The World Bank (2014) identifies South Africa as one of the most unequal countries in the world, in terms of race and gender. Martains (2012) defines inequality as a combination of economic measures that refer to income and wealth. Therefore, inequality can be described as an individual's status, rights and opportunities not being equal to those of others. Inequality results from people not having the same wealth due to injustices of poverty and unemployment. Triegaardt (2006b) describes poverty and inequality as always having co-existed for many generations, which is seen in countries that are both developed and developing. This can especially be seen when looking at the Gini-coefficient. According to the World Bank (2018), a Gini-coefficient can be defined as an aggregation of the gaps that exist between the incomes of people within a single measure. The South African Gini-coefficient stands at a high rate of 0.62. This indicates that there is a huge number of privileged and relatively comfortable people whilst others live close to or even below the poverty line (World Bank, 2018).

Statistics South Africa (2018) defines unemployment as only including people within economically active populations who are between the ages of 15-64, who are not employed in the reference week; these individuals must be actively seeking employment or attempted to start a business in the previous four weeks prior to the survey interview; were available for work, meaning there were available to start work or a business in the week of reference; lastly, in the past four weeks had been actively seeking employment or a business but is available to take the job. According to Alexander et al., (2013), it was not until the late 1970s that it became apparent that unemployment was a problem. The rate of unemployment has since been increasing at an alarming speed. Mosoetsa (2011) describes the level of unemployment in South Africa today as being worse than it was during the apartheid era.

### **2.3.1 Social exclusion leading to an inescapable web for the marginalization**

The National Development Agency (2014:72) asserts that inequality, poverty and unemployment share an undeniable link. According to Van der Westhuizen and Swart (2015), the link between inequality, poverty and unemployment is evident because 72% of the non-poor are permanently employed compared to 40% of persons living in poverty. Fourie (2011) describes the link between poverty and unemployment as “bi-directional causality”, as unemployment causes poverty, which contributes to unemployment and its persistence. Unemployment can be described as also having a multi-dimensional characteristic in that it affects race, gender, age, education and region. For the purpose of this study, the researcher specifically spoke to how unemployment impacts young Black women between the ages of 19-25 years.

According to Statistics South Africa (2018), youth unemployment although not unique to South Africa continues to be a huge factor contributing to poverty in the country. Unemployment is a serious problem, making the youth vulnerable to the labour market. It is estimated that 71 million youth between the ages of 15-24 years were unemployed internationally, with a number of them looking at long term unemployment as opposed to short-term unemployment (ILO 2016). In the first quarter of 2018, the unemployment rate of people classified as youth, who were between the ages of 15-34 years was 38.2% (Statistics South Africa 2018). Statistics South Africa (2018) reported that a number of these unemployed youths seemed to be discouraged from

seeking employment and were not attempting to further build on their skills through training and education.

### **2.3.2 Psychological effects of unemployment on the youth**

Unemployment does not just impact the economy negatively, but also has a number of severe psychological effects on people who are unemployed and faced with poverty. Carr and Sloan (2003) indicate that a number of studies have tended to focus on the economic effects of unemployment whilst neglecting the psychological effects. One cannot help but wonder what the impact would be on unemployment and poverty, if psychological effects were tended to before economic effects. According to Creed (2001), there is compelling evidence that speaks to unemployment having negative psychological consequences to well-being. A study done by Feather and O'Brien in 1986, showed that unemployed people were most likely to experience depression and had low confidence levels as compared to people who were employed (Creed 2001). Unemployment puts the poor in grave danger of acquiring both mental and physical health issues (De Witte, Rothmann and Jackson 2012). These issues include but are not limited to heart attacks and strokes, low self-esteem and depression, which lower one's chances of attaining employment.

De Witte et al., (2012) speak about the psychological effects that unemployment has on the youth in terms of low self-esteem and depression. For instance, the loss or lack of income resulting from unemployment takes away one's ability to be independent and to further make their own decisions with regards to the lifestyle they want to have (Fryer 1986). When individuals are unable to make their own decisions and do not have a sense of independence, it affects their well-being, especially their self-esteem and their development. Employment can be seen as a key factor to transitioning into adulthood and independence. Mlatsheni and Leibbrandt (2011) argue that employment has a significant role to play in the development of the youth. And so, the lack of transition from being a student to an employee can lead to negative psychological and social impacts (De Witte et al., 2012; Mlatsheni and Leibbrandt 2011).

Barker (2000) further looked at how youth experienced and reacted to unemployment as opposed to older unemployed persons. He found that unemployed youth tend to experience feelings of uselessness and being stagnated as well as low self-esteem.

As a result of long-term unemployment, the youth often find themselves in a corner to survive which can lead to them partaking in illegal activities such as crime in order to acquire some kind of financial independence (Barker 2000; Van der Berg 1992).

Van der Westhuizen and Swart (2015) reported that unemployment was the biggest challenge faced by the South African government, followed by poverty and crime. This makes it evident that despite over two decades of democracy in South Africa, with various policies and other efforts put in place, the country still struggles with eradicating poverty, inequality and unemployment. The official unemployment rate has continued to increase since 2008 and in the last decade the unemployment rate has gone from 23.2% in 2008 to 27.2% in 2018 (Statistics South Africa 2018).

## **2.4 The social security system working towards eradicating poverty**

Prior to the 1994 democratic elections, social security in South Africa focused on meeting the needs of the White minority. Mosoetsa (2011) states that social security in South Africa was aimed at eradicating the poverty problem that existed within White communities. This was a challenge for the post-apartheid government, as they had to ensure that the social security system was inclusive of all races. This was vital as the new mandate in the constitution clearly stated that, “everyone has the right to have access to social security, including if they are unable to support themselves and their dependents, appropriate social assistance” (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996).

In South Africa, social security is referred to as “a wide range of public and private measures that provide cash or in-kind benefits both, first, in the event of an individuals earning power permanently ceasing, being interrupted, never developing, or being exercised only at unacceptable social costs and when such a person is unable to avoid poverty and in order to maintain children. The aim of social security is: poverty prevention, poverty alleviation, social compensation and income distribution” (Department of Welfare and Population Development 1997:48).

Similar to this is the South African Constitution (1996) which states that people without means to meet their needs ought to receive assistance. The South African Constitution states that “everyone has the right to have access to social security and appropriate social assistance if they are unable to support themselves and their dependents” (Republic of South Africa 1996: Bill of Rights section 27). Furthermore, the Department



of Welfare and Population Development speaks of social security as being a system that is comprehensive and advocated for by the White Paper of Social Welfare (1997).

The ILO (1998) defined social security as being the protection provided to members of society through a number of public mitigation strategies, that work towards improving the economy and social injustices that result from unemployment, lack of health care, old age and death, poverty and inequality. The ILO's definition is the most accepted and used definition in both developed and developing countries. This definition helps both the government and the private sector to take responsibility to protect and care for those individuals who have been exposed to hardships beyond their control (Patel 2005). This is because the government does not have the necessary skills and resources to protect its entire population, which is why it is crucial that government forms partnerships with the private sector that have those skills and resources.

The South African social security system is made up of social assistance and social insurance. Social assistance and social insurance are both equally responsible along with employees and employers, citizens as well as the state in ensuring that everyone is covered by the social security system (The White Paper for Social Welfare 1997). Social insurance is a contributory system of benefits that have been organised by the government through specific contributions made by employees and employers (Patel 2005). These benefits include unemployment funds, retirement plans and savings, maternity leave and the Road Accident Fund (RAF). People who have private savings are also seen as having a type of social insurance.

Social assistance is the non-contributory system designed to mitigate poverty caused by the injustices of the economy, society and environmental conditions that have a negative impact on the earnings of households (Patel 2005). These services also include the various social grants. These grants include the Child Support Grant, the older persons grant and the disability grant. Free health services and schooling are also part of this system. For instance, the government has a loan and bursary program called the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). This program is aimed at providing bursaries and loans at zero percent interest, which help students in tertiary institutions to cover their fees. After the 'fees must fall' movement, this was then turned into a bursary that requires no repayments from students who are sponsored. Social

assistance also has a policy called the Reconstruction Development Programme (RDP) which is aimed at poverty alleviation through addressing the social injustices and lack of social services and resources in the country (Patel 2015).

#### **2.4.1 The evolution of the Social Grant System Grant**

From the social security system stemmed the social grant system. This is administered by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), which has been mandated by the South African Social Security Agency Act of 2004. According to Khadiagala et al., (2018), about 16 million people received some kind of grant in 2015. This would mean that about 40% of the poorest households rely on social grants as a source of income (Khadiagala et al., 2018). The goal for social grants is to ensure that people are able to make ends meet and to survive above the poverty rate (Patel 2015). Social grants also aim at providing social security which according to Patel (2005:123) is “the protection which society provides for its members through a series of public measures, against economic and social distress”. Social grants play a crucial role for a developing country such as South Africa in poverty reduction as it is targeted at individuals who are vulnerable to poverty and do not have other means to escape this cycle of poverty.

The Constitution as previously mentioned makes the necessary provisions to provide social assistance to those persons considered vulnerable (Patel 2005). For instance, the older persons grant caters to recipients 60 years and older who have not been able to accumulate their own pensions savings over the years, as a result of low wage jobs and being unemployed (SASSA 2014:1). The older persons grant makes a significant contribution in many households (Burns, Keswell and Leibbrandt 2005). This is because it helps elders who are unemployed and no longer able to work to contribute to meeting their personal needs and those of their families. There is also the disability grant. The grant is for poor adults who are considered to be medically unable to have a job and support themselves or others (Goldblatt 2009). In order for one to be considered for this grant, they would need to have a physical or mental disability that has been deemed so or diagnosed by a medical doctor (Simchowitz 2004; Goldblatt 2009; Natrass 2006).

The Child Support Grant is provided to children until the age of 18 years. This grant is paid to the biological parent or caregivers of the child. These caregivers are usually the women in the family. It is not to say that men do not collect the child grant for their



children, it is just very rare. Research has also mostly focused on the experiences of women on grants. The Child Support Grant is paid to these caregivers or biological parents based on a means test. This test identifies whether or not they financially qualify for assistance, as the aim of the grant is to support those less vulnerable. According to Hall (2013), the means test requires that the combined annual income of parents or guardians be R69 600 or less and that the annual income of a single parent be R34 800 or less. The application process takes place at various SASSA offices, where people are required to fill out application forms and provide supporting documents (SASSA 2016). In order to qualify for this particular grant, the main caretaker and child need to be citizens of South Africa (SASSA 2016).

The Child Support Grant helps to provide assistance for children living in poverty, by helping households access resources needed for basic survival (Patel 2005). According to Khadiagala et al., (2018), the child grant rate was at R350 in 2015. It has since increased to R420 in April 2019 and will increase again in October 2019 to R430. Studies have shown that not only does the child grant help in providing for those children, but it has also served as an empowerment tool to the caregivers who collect the grant on behalf of the children. Speaking to this, Patel and Hochfeld (2011) conducted a study in which 82% of the women indicated that the grant had improved their lives. About 65% of these women, more especially those who had no active partners, reflected that had they not been recipients of this grant they would not have been able to make ends meet (Patel and Hochfeld 2011).

There are numerous studies that have been done that indicate that the money received from the Child Support Grant does benefit the children, family and the women as well. This is because the money is often used towards food and household goods. The money has helped these mothers in seeking employment opportunities, as they also use the money for transportation. Grant money has even helped in starting up businesses that generate larger incomes in the households (UNICEF 2014; Patel and Hochfeld 2011). Patel et al., (2013) highlight how the Child Support Grant provides economic freedom for women from their partners and empowers them in the sense that they have the power and resources to make financial decisions and not depend on their partners. In her book *"Eating from One Pot"*, Mosoetsa (2011) found that women in many households have taken on the role of being bread winners from the

little money they receive from the child grants. The study found that the money is used to support their children and other family members (Mosoetsa 2011).

Despite the benefits that the child grants seem to have for women, studies have also raised questions on whether or not it has also contributed to or promoted teenage pregnancies. Makiwane et al., (2006) describe teenage pregnancy as a social problem. This is due to the fact that it causes physiological harm to both the young mother and child; leads to inter-generational poverty for both the mother and child; and concerns of support from the father due to the pregnancy occurring from outside wedlock (Makiwane et al., 2006; Hoffman, Foster and Furstenburg 1993; Geronimus and Korenman 1993). Although there seems to have been a pattern in countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, there seems to be no solid direct link between child grants and teenage pregnancy in South Africa (Makiwane et al., 2006).

#### **2.4.2 The limitations of the social security system**

The social security system helps in poverty alleviation but does not help to eradicate poverty as they are aimed to do (Midgley 1995). This can be seen in the increased number of recipients of the social grants. In 2014, about 14 million households were classified as poor and qualified for social grants. Currently the country now has over 17 million beneficiaries of social grants (Statistics South Africa 2014; Statistics South Africa 2018). This is a clear indication that poverty is not eradicated but is rather being maintained and people are not escaping the cycle of poverty. Lombard (2007) also noted that the social security system is now being burdened with the high numbers of recipients and it has become highly unsustainable.

Another limitation of the social security system is youth unemployment and poverty, which as discussed are very serious challenges that are linked to inequality. Despite the alarming statistics of poverty rates among the youth and women in South Africa, young people have very limited access to the social security system, as it is aimed at persons considered vulnerable (Statistics South Africa, 2018; Altman, Mokomane and Wright 2014). This means that the social security system only provides assistance to people who are disabled, aged and young (Mosoetsa 2011). That in itself is a limitation as it leaves out a huge gap of individuals who are unable to meet their basic needs (Mosoetsa 2011). The Social Assistance Act No.13 of 2004 defines vulnerable

persons as persons with a disability, older persons with no source of income and children in low income families or orphans in the foster care system.

What the social security system fails to account for is what happens to children who for a number of years were dependent on receiving the social grant and now no longer receive it due to age. As will be seen in the findings chapter, this means that a number of previous beneficiaries are cut off whilst in high school and are left with no source of income or other forms of support. Mosoetsa (2011) makes mention of the fact that children who have been receiving the child grant for years do not receive anything at all when they reach the age limit, despite still being poor and not having a source of income to cover the money they had been receiving.

In the context of the high unemployment rate and changing poverty, the question that needs to be asked is, "What happens in households where there is no elder, no one with a disability but has young Black women who have no children and therefore no access to any of the social grants available?" Because when young Black women are unemployed, it increases the risk of not having access to tertiary education and they are therefore unable to further their studies in order to compete in the labour market which requires experiences and skill. Many debates have taken place on whether or not to introduce the Basic Income Grant (BIG) (Nattrass 2002). The BIG would be targeted specifically at the unemployed youth to avoid them being trapped in the cycle of poverty (Nattrass 2002).

Even though the social security system post-apartheid has improved, it is not as comprehensive as it could be. In response to the White Paper for Social Welfare that was introduced in 1997, the Congress of South African Trade Unions campaigned for the implementation of the Basic Income Grant (COSATU 2003). According to Van Parijs (2000), basic income is described as the income individuals would receive from government on a monthly basis without being screened for a means test. The Basic Income Grant is aimed at mitigating the high rates of unemployment and underemployment (Makino 2004). An amount of R100 was the suggested income to provide to people, but however, the amount is well below the poverty line (Makino 2004). It would seem that the purpose of BIG is not to create dependency and comfort for people, but rather to provide the necessary resources to assist the poor and unemployed in job hunting. If ever such mitigation could be adopted, it could assist

individuals such as the participants who took part in this study in expanding their job searching locations and having access to the internet to apply for work and enroll in tertiary institutions.

## **2.5 Survival of the fittest strategies**

Survival or surviving can be described as the act of continuing to live despite difficult circumstances. In 1989, Rogers defined survival strategies as attempts that are made by persons living in poverty to make an income in order to meet their basic needs (Muthwa 1994). It is important to understand what is meant by the term to survive as well as survival strategies, as the study looked to explore how the participants survive post grant access. Survival strategies can have various meanings and are based on what needs to be survived. Randcliffe (1986) defined household “livelihood” strategies as the decisions, actions and goals that people have within their households to maintain and improve their livelihoods. Chant (1991:7) describes household survival strategies as “general methods by which poor households adapt to and attempt to cope with adverse external circumstances”. Chant (1991) goes on to explain that household survival strategies include responses to making changes that will assist in adapting to new circumstances.

In her paper on ‘Female Household Headship and Household Survival in Soweto’, Muthwa (1994:168) describes survival strategies as being “efforts, haphazard or well-worked out”, whereby households work out a way in which they can engage and make the necessary changes to adapt to adversities. Her study further looked at the survival strategies which included “non-market” exchanges, these included women doing each other favours in exchange for other favours or assistance at later stages. Similar to this was a study done by Gilbert (1998), in which she looked at the impact of forming networks for women as survival strategies. Similar to these strategies used by women in rural areas who were both unemployed and employed, homeless women also formed networks with other homeless women and survived by assisting each other (Huey and Berndt 2008).

It would seem that women also resort to socially unacceptable means in order to survive (Huey and Berndt 2008). For instance, in a study that focused on the survival strategies of homeless women with children, some of the strategies that emerged included “survival sex”, which is the act of exchanging sexual favours for money

(Wesley 2009). In another study done in the North West province, it was found that some of the survival strategies that young, unemployed and poverty stricken women use included exploiting their single statuses (Compion and Cook 2006). These strategies further include using their bodies to depend on male companions. Romantic relationships can be seen as the act of people entering a relationship due to the financial gain or other benefits they stand to get from that interaction. Another study showed that young adults, particularly women are influenced by financial gain to commit to a relationship in the early stages of a relationship (Mao, Danes, Serido and Shim 2017; Giddens 1992).

Survival strategies often include hustling, which can be defined as the last resort in which people take in order to survive. Hustling can also be seen as coming from feelings of being stuck and wanting to better one's living conditions (Thieme 2013). Education was described as another form of a survival strategy. Similar to the studies that have been conducted, the participants in this study also had inadequate levels of skills and qualifications to actively participate in the labour market (Burger and Von Fintel 2014; Burger and Von Fintel 2009).

## **2.6 Theoretical Framework: Black Feminist Approach**

This study took on the Black feminist approach as a theoretical lens. According to Neuman (2011), the feminist approach is often conducted by feminist researchers who are females. These researchers make use of multiple research techniques with the aim of giving women a voice. This approach is informed by the assumption that the subjective experiences of women are different to those of men. According to Crenshaw (1989), Black women can and often face experiences in ways that are similar to both White women and Black men. For instance, both young Black men and women exit the child grant after 18 years, however, their experiences are different because of how society perceives them.

This study specifically looked at identifying the experiences that young Black women go through post child grant access as well as how these young women experience unemployment from a feminist perspective. Cooks and Fonow (1990) describes the purpose of feminist research is to empower women. This is done by putting women at the centre of research and placing emphasis on the experiences of women. According to Crenshaw (1989), not looking at Black women's experiences differently from those

of White women and Black men, their experiences are hardly addressed as they have been generalized to those of the White women and Black men.

Black feminism was most appropriate for this study as it does not only focus on gender inequalities but looks at race and class (Neuman 2011). Black feminism believes that people have different experiences of gender based on their location within socially constructed cultural, political, ethnicity as well as class contexts (Neuman 2011). Collins (2000) states that the experiences of Black women's work and family in traditional African-American culture suggests that African-American women as a group experience a world different from that of those who are not Black and female.

According to Collins (2000), being Black and female exposes Black women to certain common experiences, which as a result may lead to women having different perspectives and experiences. Collins (2000) looks at Black feminism as a form of empowerment for women of colour as it provides a platform to share their thoughts and experiences as they see fit. The Black feminist approach further allowed the researcher to put the experiences of Black women at the centre of the research concerns which in turn allowed the researcher to build from those experiences by providing possible mitigations. This approach also allowed for the researcher to assume researcher reflexivity (Smith 1994; Harding 1987).

A Black feminist approach makes use of multiple methods and required a research tool that would help it achieve its interactive approach thus allowing the researcher to interact with the participants on a personal level. Furthermore, the Black Feminist Approach aims to put the women at the centre of the research by giving them the voice to describe their experiences from a women's perspective, through interacting with the researcher (Neuman 2011).

## **2.7 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed various literature that can help to better comprehend social problems experienced by Black women post-social grant access. The chapter did so by first discussing poverty, through defining it and providing the two types of poverty namely; absolute and relative poverty. The relationship between gender, more specifically Black women and poverty was also discussed. The chapter also looked at Black family structures and how they have been impacted by poverty. The chapter went on to discuss inequality, by elaborating on social inequality and how Black



women are affected by inequality. Unemployment was discussed in length and linked to poverty and inequality. It also assessed how Black women have been impacted by unemployment, more specifically youth unemployment and what it means for a Black woman to be unemployed.

The chapter further focused on how poverty affects Black women. It explored the relationship between Black women with unemployment, poverty and inequality. The chapter looked at how poverty, inequality and unemployment intersect with race and gender. The social security system was discussed in length. The types of social security systems were discussed as well as the Basic Income Grant. Furthermore, the chapter went on to discuss the Child Support Grant. The study looked at how this grant functions and the impact it has had on Black families, more especially young Black women who are unemployed and have no means to furthering their education. The limitations of the social security system were also shared. The chapter went on to define what survival strategies are and why Black women in South Africa find themselves needing to have survival strategies. Lastly, the chapter briefly discussed the theoretical framework that has provided a lens in which the study is looked through.

## **Chapter 3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This study was an exploratory study that was informed by a Black Feminist theoretical framework. This chapter aims to explain how the experiences of young Black women post child grant access were explored. In this chapter, one will find a vivid narrative of the researcher's personal experiences and thoughts throughout the research process. The researcher has also shared how she did not initially think she had anything in common with the participants, besides also being a Black woman from the East Rand in her twenties. The researcher further shares how the commonalities and differences she discovered influenced the way in which she conducted her research and related to participants whilst in the pursuit of answering the question: What are the survival strategies of young Black unemployed women without access to social security post child grant access?

The chapter provides a detailed and in-depth discussion of the research approach that was used for this study, and an explanation of the selection process of the participants. The research site has also been discussed in this chapter. Furthermore, the data collection methods and the process of analysing the data are shared. Thereafter, the chapter looks at reflexivity. This is done through reflecting on the experiences of the researcher throughout the study. Furthermore, this chapter discusses an audit trail as well as the ethical considerations. This chapter will conclude by looking at the strengths and weaknesses of the study as a whole.

### **3.2 Selection of Participants**

This study used a qualitative research approach, which can be described as research that makes use of various methods that utilise qualifying words and descriptions to record as well as investigate various aspects of society (Bless and Higson-Smith, 2000). Qualitative research can be seen as a primary exploratory research that is used to acquire a more in-depth understanding of opinions and motivations, as well as one that provides for insights into a problem (Babbie 2013). For instance, the qualitative research approach assisted the researcher to further comprehend the problem of social security and provided her with the possible solutions to the research question. In the beginning of the study, the researcher had a different understanding of what



social security systems entailed and the issues that came with it on a theoretical view. However, after the researcher had conducted the interviews, she got a more personal understanding from the young Black women who experience it first-hand. Qualitative research therefore allowed for the researcher to interact with participants on a personal level, which can be seen in the responses provided by participants in the study (Martians 2005).

The qualitative approach complimented the Black feminist approach in that it enabled Black women to be at the centre of the study and tell their own stories first-hand (Babbie and Mouton 2009). More so, it provided a platform for young Black women, who are previous beneficiaries of the Child Support Grant to share their experiences of being beneficiaries of the Child Support Grant. The participants were also able to express their feelings and provide their understanding on life post Child Support Grant access.

### **3.3 Qualitative Research Approach**

Purposive sampling was used to select the participants for the study (Ritchie and Lewis, Nicholls and Ormston 2013). Due to how specific the criteria for participants was, it proved to be a challenge to locate participants who fit the study's participation criteria. The study focused on interviewing participants who were young Black unemployed females between the ages of 19-25 years. The participants were not supposed to have children in order to qualify for participation in the study, as if they had children it would give them access to the Child Support Grant as care givers. The participants had to be unemployed and not enrolled in any tertiary learning institutions. Lastly, they had to be residents of the East Rand.

At times, the researcher would locate a possible participant only to find that the participant either had a child, or was in a tertiary institution or was employed. As a result, the researcher had to use snowball sampling in order to locate participants that met the criteria. Snowball sampling depends on locating participants based on referrals of other participants and is used when the process of locating participants is not easy (Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole 2013; De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport 2011; Babbie and Mouton 2001). This method proved to be fruitful in that the researcher was referred to other participants with similar characteristics as those who had already been interviewed (Monette, Sullivan and Dejong 2005).

Five of the young women were nineteen years of age, two were twenty years old, one was twenty-one years old, another was twenty-two years old and the oldest participant was twenty-four years of age. Additionally, all the participants were unemployed and had no children of their own. Only one participant had stopped school in grade 11. Most of the participants stated that they had passed their grade 12, but others had failed their grade 12 and were either in the process or had attempted to upgrade their grade 12 prior to the interviews. Whilst seven of the participants had passed their grade 12, three of them had failed, with four of them in the process of upgrading their marks. Below is a table that provides a clear description of the research participants interviewed:

**Table 1: Description of research participants**

Name	Gender	Age	Highest Qualification
Mpumi	Female	19	Grade 12 (Passed)
Sharon	Female	22	Grade 12 (Passed)
Nolwazi	Female	19	Grade 12 (Passed)
Nelly	Female	19	Grade 12 (Upgrading)
Pontsho	Female	24	Grade 12 (Passed)
Zodwa	Female	20	Grade 12 (Upgrading)
Thuli	Female	19	Grade 12 (Upgrading)
Zozo	Female	20	Grade 11 (Upgrading)
Thobeka	Female	21	Grade 11
Bathabile	Female	19	Grade 11

### 3.4 Research Site

The participants who took part in the study all resided in the East Rand, specifically in a township called Daveyton. Initially, the proposed research site for this study was an area called Boksburg in the East Rand of Johannesburg, which falls under the Metropolitan Municipality of Ekurhuleni. When the researcher went into the field in January 2019, she thought that it was going to be an easy and quick process, in which

she would talk to a social worker at SASSA, who would refer her to possible participants from their database. The researcher quickly realised that it would not be that easy as SASSA does not keep record of previous beneficiaries on their database. The researcher was then introduced to a social worker who works at SASSA, in Benoni. The social worker was unable to provide the details of clients on her database due to client confidentiality. However, she happened to know two participants who met the study participation criteria. The participants were her younger sister and a friend of hers, both from Daveyton. The first two interviews then took place in January and the researcher utilised the social worker's office to conduct the interviews, as participants requested to meet at a neutral place that they were familiar with.

The first two participants referred the researcher to two other possible participants. However, these participants' either did not meet the full criteria or were not interested in partaking in a study without being financially compensated. The researcher met with a third participant in May 2019 at a McDonalds in Benoni. Following this, the researcher was faced with another stumbling block in locating and identifying participants for the study. The researcher shared her frustrations with one of the lecturers at her department, who suggested that she take a different approach and rather speak with the women in the queues at SASSA to see if they did not know anyone who would meet these criteria. This is something that the researcher's mother had also been suggesting for months, but however, the researcher had not thought it would work. The researcher was also afraid to approach the people in the queue. With time running out she had no choice but to try this method out, as she felt that she had nothing to lose at that point. It proved to be fruitful as it was the breakthrough in finding participants. The women in the queue referred her to their nieces, granddaughters as well as sisters, who met the study criteria.

The last seven interviews took place over a period of one week in June 2019. The researcher travelled to Daveyton, where she met with the participants at Daveyton Mall. Daveyton Mall was suggested by the participants as it was within a reasonable walking distance for them. The mall was a 30 minute drive from the researchers' home in the East Rand. Most of the participants came from Zenzele, an informal settlement in Daveyton, which in isiZulu means 'self-sufficient'. In the late 1980s, the area of Zenzele was a squatter camp and had no form of community development taking place.

The area started to see some development post-1994 when the African National Congress (ANC) became the first democratic government in South Africa. The ANC introduced a socio-economic policy called the Reconstruction Development Programme. This programme was aimed at rectifying the injustices caused by the apartheid government through building houses for people who did not have (The White Paper 1997). A large number of people in Daveyton are yet to receive houses, which also speaks to the country's limited social security.

According to Statistics South Africa (2011), Daveyton is a township in the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality of Gauteng South Africa. Daveyton borders Etwatwa and Springs and the closet town to it is Benoni, which is 18 kilometres away. Daveyton is also known as Tuka or Vuta as it is rumoured to be the first Black township in the area to have access to electricity (Statistics South Africa 2011). The population of Daveyton is at an estimated 127, 967 with 35, 639 households surrounding the area. The language spoken by the majority of the population of the area is isiZulu, followed by Sepedi and isiXhosa (Statistics South Africa 2011). This explains why most of the participants who took part in the study spoke isiZulu.

Upon the researcher's arrival, it came to her attention that the area was a predominately Black populated area. What was interesting to notice in comparison to the malls that the researcher usually frequents was that there were street vendors right outside the mall who could be seen as being competitors of the stores inside the mall. If anything, this can be seen as a survival strategy that the people of the area have employed in combating unemployment and the difficulty of finding formal employment, through partaking in informal employment (Alexander and Wale 2013).

The researcher met with the participants at the KFC inside the Daveyton mall. Of all the areas in the mall, KFC was fairly empty and provided for a comfortable place for them to sit whilst they spoke. Although the researcher is from the East Rand, she was not familiar with the Daveyton area and had never been there before. Despite not being familiar with the area, the researcher did not struggle to get to and from the area. The researcher's mother and her colleague who is familiar with the area, drove the researcher to the Mall. On the first day, the researcher felt uneasy and unsafe, due to the crime rumours that she had heard about the area. The researcher feared that the

local residents would notice that she was not familiar with the area and try to rob her. As the week progressed, she did start to relax.

### **3.5 Data Collection**

To ensure that the study was explanatory and descriptive, the researcher used face to face interviews to collect data. By utilising semi-structured interviews through probing and asking open-ended questions, the researcher was able to get the participants to provide vivid responses of their experiences (De Vos et al., 2011). Semi-structured interviews were perfect in a sense that the researcher did not have to ask the questions in any particular order. Additionally, the follow-up questions were based on the participant's responses to previous questions and this helped assess the atmosphere and where the interview was headed before asking certain questions.

Rubin and Rubin (1995) speak of the importance of being flexible when conducting qualitative research. The researcher found this to be great in that it afforded her the opportunity to go with the flow of the participant and not be tied to following a specific order when asking the questions. As a result, the interviews were more conversational, asking them particular questions to gain a better understanding on the topic, which really complimented the Black Feminist Approach. Feminist researchers often aim to understand the lives and experiences of women and these methodological techniques employed in the study helped in doing just that (Bhandary 2016; Swirsky and Angelone 2015; Phillips and Cree 2014). The researcher found herself being able to engage on a personal level with participants and to share her personal experiences with them in matters where they shared similarities. Initially, she was not sure if this was ethical to do as a researcher, but she found that the theoretical framework allowed her to do so, which was appreciated, as she felt like this enabled her to empower the participants and she felt empowered by their experiences as they shared information.

Semi-structured interviews according to De Vos et al., (2011), aim to collect data that is in-depth and rich. Therefore, semi-structured interviews helped the researcher to collect data on the demographics of participants, such as their age, socio-economic status, race and gender. Through using semi-structured interviewing, the researcher was able to ask both open and close-ended questions, as well as probe the participants to allow for a more detailed and in depth responses or narratives or their experiences. The interviews ranged from about 30 minutes to 50 minutes long. The

researcher made use of an interview guide throughout the interviews (see Appendix C). The researcher found the interview guide to be an essential tool as it provided guidance for an organised interview. Furthermore, the process of using an interview guide helped in uncovering themes in the interview (Martians 2005).

During the interview process, the researcher took notes and recorded the sessions. Permission was given by the participants to record these interviews. Permission was given by signing the consent forms (see Appendix B). The researcher also observed the body language and voice projection of the participants throughout the interview. This enabled her to assess whether to further probe the participants or not (Egan 2014). The language used in interviews differed from each participant. The participants were free and encouraged to communicate in their preferred language, which in most of cases, participants spoke in isiZulu. The researcher used both English and isiZulu to communicate with the participants.

Studies that have been conducted in the case of which language should be used when transcribing suggest and encourage that researchers try to include original terms in their transcripts (Brown and Casanova 2014). The researcher found in so doing that she was able to clearly bring forth the voices and narratives of the participants in the study, which was very important for her in the study, especially considering the theoretical framework.

The interviews all took place during the day, as the researcher had to be considerate of the safety of the young women as they did not have access to private transport. The interviews took place at three main areas, namely, the office at SASSA, McDonalds and KFC at Daveyton Mall. Meeting at KFC had both its pros and cons. At times, the restaurant would get noisy and there would be distractions, such as the employees making intercom announcements to customers (Jacobs and Ferguson 2012). Other distractions included the participant's cell phones ringing during the interview. Taking into consideration that we were at a local mall, people spotted two of the participants they knew and came to greet them. These distractions did not entirely affect the quality of the interviews as the participants kept the phone calls and greetings brief.

It was important that the interviews took place at a neutral place so that the participants would be at ease, more especially because they had never met the researcher (Jacobs and Ferguson 2012). Similar to this Gill, Stewart, Tresure and Chardwick (2008) state



that participants need to be given the first option of choosing a place that they feel safe being at. This is why the researcher met with the participants at Daveyton Mall. That being said, the settings chosen for the majority of the interviews were fast food outlets, and in order to use the facilities, we had to purchase something.

In this regard, the researcher purchased beverages for the participants. This was not to bribe or try influence the way in which the participants thought. According to Davies and Huges (2014), by offering participants something to drink, the researcher can be seen as creating a much-needed icebreaker between the researcher and participant. The researcher took care of the bill because the participants were not in a financial position to purchase a drink or coffee, as they were unemployed and had no stable source of income. Additionally, the researcher felt responsible for having the participants come meet with her and so felt it was only fair that she took care of the bill.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

Once the data had been collected, the researcher was required to analyse the data. This is the process whereby one tries to understand, explain and interpret the responses and people who have provided the data in the interviews conducted. The aim here was to study the meanings of the content collected (Gibbs 2002). The researcher transcribed ten interviews after having recorded the sessions using her cell phone. In order for effective analysis, the researcher transcribed via verbatim. The interviews ranged from 30 minutes long to 50 minutes long. Thematic content analysis was used to categorise and analysis the data. Thematic content analysis can be described as the process of categorising data according to particular themes that reoccur throughout the interviews (May 2005). This process gave the researcher the opportunity to identify and compare similar responses as well as identify themes that helped answer the research question. When analysing data, it is important that one begin first by organising the data, dividing it into themes and finally presenting the findings in forms of discussions, in order to answer the research question (Creswell 2009; Kumar 2005).

The process of transcribing was rather exhausting and required the researcher to be precise and attentive. More so, because the researcher was required to translate the responses from isiZulu to English. The researcher also had to keep in mind to ensure



that she used some original texts, so that the participants' voices stood out. She also did not want their feelings and experiences to be lost in translation. In the same way that study looks at race, gender and class, the researcher had to think about language in a similar way (Brown and Casanova 2014). This is because the language that we communicate in is influenced by our cultures and, which in turn influence the way we think and are perceived by others. In the process of translating, the researcher did not want to change or dilute their experiences. This would take away from the values of Black Feminism as well as her values and what she stands for in research, which is letting the participant speak their truth, whatever truth that may be and regardless of how it may make the researcher feel.

The process of transcribing was challenging. The difference in language being the one challenge that stood out for the researcher. The majority of the participants were isiZulu speaking and during the interview, the researcher found herself having to rephrase the questions in isiZulu in order for the participants to comprehend what was being said. In turn, during the process of transcribing, the researcher took time to understanding certain phrases in isiZulu that she was unfamiliar with, as her first language was Sesotho. In order to ensure that the researcher was translating correctly, she double checked with her isiZulu speaking colleagues. The researcher picked up similar phrases or terms used by the participants that one would not necessarily hear anywhere else as they were colloquially used in Daveyton.

Identifying themes was a rather intense exercise, which required the researcher to read over the interviews, transcribed a couple of times to make sense of what was being said and what it meant. In so doing, the researcher was able to identify themes and to ensure that the themes identified were not a repetition of the themes already identified.

### **3.7 Reflexivity: Memoirs of a Social Worker driven by Black Feminism**

Reflexivity can be described as the process in which the researcher taps into their own bias, beliefs and feelings throughout the research process and assess the impact that these attitudes have on the research topic being studied (Payne and Payne 2004). Malterud (2001) states that a researcher's background and position will have an effect on how they choose to collect data, the findings they consider most appropriate and how they present the data. Babbie (2013) speaks of the importance of researchers

being able to be self-critical with themselves throughout the study. According to Kumar (2005), reflexivity is an important process of research, in which the researchers continuously keep track of their perceptions, values, experiences as well as their behavioural patterns. In so doing, the researchers are able to remain accountable and aware of how their behaviour and perceptions can influence the way in which data is collected and analysed.

In the case of this study, the researcher had never been a beneficiary of social security, nor was she unemployed. It could be said that the researcher had nothing in common with the participants, apart from the fact that the researcher also identified as a Black woman between the ages of 19-25. Initially when the researcher began this research, she did not anticipate identifying any more commonalities with the participants. A lot has been written on the insider/outsider debate. Researchers, tend to be positioned as playing both the insider/outsider role (Brown and Casanova, 2014). This can be attributed to factors such as social class, gender, nationality, highest academic qualification and so forth. The researcher considered herself as an insider because of her gender and race as well as the geographical area of residence (Maxwell, Abrams, Zungu and Mosavel 2016). The researcher quickly learned how these factors did not really make her an insider. She did not come from Daveyton, her socio-economic status was different, her level of education was higher, and the fact that she was there as a researcher placed her in an outsider's position (Brown and Casanova 2014).

The researcher therefore had to assess how her demographics, opinions as well as experiences affected the way in which she delivered the questions and interacted with the participants. She further had to assess what her views and feelings were. Finally, the researcher had to critically assess how these factors influenced her research findings and the manner in which she went about presenting them. Throughout the interview process of the study, the researcher employed the skills that she acquired during her undergraduate years in Social Work. Being a trained social worker helped the researcher with showing empathy throughout the interviews and being empathetic to the experiences that the participants shared. According to Sheafor and Horejsi (2006), empathy can be described as the process of a researcher being able to put themselves in the shoes of the participants. The purpose of this was that she gained a better understanding of the experiences of the participants.

For instance, when one of the participants shared her experience of losing her mother, and the aftermaths of that, she broke down and started crying. The researcher reacted with giving her some time to gather herself and offered her a tissue. The researcher has personally never experienced the death of a loved one but was able to understand her pain. This is because in her capacity as a social worker, she has dealt with grief and bereavement.

Unlike the participants, the researcher felt like she had been fortunate enough to further her education at a tertiary institution and not have had to worry about tuition fees as she was on a government bursary. The researcher is also a part-time student employee at the University of Johannesburg. Furthermore, the researcher does not have any personal knowledge or experience of growing up in a township. It is not to say that growing up in a township is unfortunate, but however, the geographical locations of townships were deliberately positioned away from CBD areas where most opportunities are (the researcher explores this more in chapter 4).

Similar to the participants, the researcher also wanted to further her education in 2013, but was faced with financial challenges. The researcher then took a gap year. Seeking employment during that gap year came with many challenges and rejection because like the participants, she was fresh out of high school, had never held down a job and so did not have the experience required by potential employers. The researcher struggled with seeing her peers in her neighbourhood progressing and either going to school or work, and felt like she was falling behind in life. This is something that all participants shared to have felt as well.

Similar to the participants, the researcher was required to take on domestic chores as she was unemployed while her siblings were still in school and her mother had to go to work. The researcher felt like her social life was also pretty much non-existent because she did not get a monthly allowance for just being at home. What resonated most with the researcher was something one of the participants shared about her single mother. The researcher found herself relating to this because like many of the participants, she was also raised by a single mother and there was a time when her mother was unemployed and the family had no formal or stable source of income. The researcher remembered her own mother saying something similar to one of the

participants' mother. Zodwa, one of the participants in the study is quoted as having said:

*Yoh, my mother has a lot of confidence and self-esteem. Like she will even say that she does not care whether or not my dad helps me out because she was able to raise me until I finished school, so nothing will stop her from helping me out. (Zodwa – 20, 06<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

The researcher cannot claim that her personal life experiences influenced her decision to embark on this specific study. In fact, the researcher was oblivious to the fact that she and the participants could possibly have similar experiences and that she would resonate with them so much. It was not until the researcher had started conducting the interviews and transcribing those interviews that she began to identify the similar experiences that she shared with the participants. The study was chosen purely because of the interest the researcher had in social policies and her passion for working with Black women.

Despite having the ability to show empathy and to relate the shared experiences of the participants, the researcher was able to manage her emotions and not show her attachment to the experiences of the participants. Trainor and Graue (2013) place emphasis on how important it is that the researcher master the art of detaching from their participants and not show emotion. Oakley (1981) speaks to the importance of striking a balance between the required warmth to generate rapport and the detachment needed in order to see the interviewee as an object under surveillance. Dickson–Swift, James, Kippen and Liamputtong (2007) also speak of how challenging it often is for qualitative researchers to detach from their participants and the experiences of their participants. The researcher found this to be true, especially when she went home after the interviews and found herself thinking of the participants and what they were going through.

Initially, the researcher thought she would not struggle with detaching, but with taking on a Feminist approach and finding so many similarities that she shared with the participants, the researcher found herself completely invested and attached to the participants in not so obvious ways. For instance, the researcher could not bring herself to conducting the interviews without buying the participants a drink. This is

because she felt immense guilt of having asked them to meet for an interview with no remuneration, even though she knew their financial situation.

Mama (1995) states that the researcher is not supposed to give his or her own personal opinions, values or ideas, as these could have the potential to influence the participant, which could affect the results of the study. The researcher struggled in this regard, as when she was listening to the interviews during the transcribing period, the researcher found herself having given the participants the steps or websites they could visit to look for work or funding to further their education. Similar to this, Khunou (2006) reflects in her study on how she struggled with putting aside the experiences of the women she interviewed and to objectify them as research participants. This can make one feel disempowered as a researcher. The researcher shared similar feelings of being disempowered and not being able to help the participants any further.

One conversation that stood out and made the researcher realise that she had been attached with the study was one with her mother. After picking her up from her last interview, the researcher recalls telling her mother how bad she felt for having sat and listened to the experiences the participants shared, and how she was going to use these experiences to essentially better her life, through the one thing they were all trying to get an education and job.

The researcher does however, strongly believe that as researchers, we need to take more accountability and responsibility in how our research will be of assistance and empowerment in the now and not in the long run or in conference rooms where our participants do not even get to be a part of the conversations or solutions that are about them. Patel (2015) talks about democracy and participation as being a pillar of social development, which speaks to ensuring that individuals are involved in all decision making on issues that affect them both directly and indirectly. The researcher thinks that as researchers, we need to take into account the financial status of the participants when conducting research.

### **3.8 Audit Trail**

In order to clearly reflect and understand her positionality in this research study, the researcher kept an audit trail, which included recording her feelings and views in a journal (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Observation played a huge role in the data collection

process as a form of audit trail. Observation means that the researcher places herself in the shoes of the participant, which enabled her to have first-hand experience. This was done through capturing and recording the sessions and taking down of notes during the sessions.

Making use of personal reflections and taking notes also contributed to the data collection. The notes consisted of personal thoughts, feelings and learning that the researcher had experienced during the study. Audit trails are undoubtedly very crucial in any research project (Carcary 2009). In so doing, keeping an audit trail assisted the researcher in critically reflecting and analysing as well as seeking clarity through understanding of the data collected as well as why it was collected in that particular manner.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

Qualitative research can be a personal interaction between the researcher and the people being studied and often the research topic can be sensitive. It is for this reason that there is a code of ethics that researchers need to adhere to. This is done to protect both the researcher and the rights of the participants, more especially to ensure that they are not put in harm's way and to ensure confidentiality (Flick, von Kardorff and Steinke 2004). The researcher received ethical clearance to proceed with interviews from the University of Johannesburg, Faculty of Humanities Ethics Committee.

The researcher was working with Black women, so she had to be gender and racially sensitive when conducting her study. The researcher had to take on the principle of beneficence which required research to be conducted in a manner that was both effective and promoted the welfare of the participants (Bless et al., 2013). By taking on the Black feminist approach the researcher was better informed about women who have been marginalised and was able to conduct research that was ethical and mindful of their feelings and opinions.

Furthermore, participants who seemed to experience emotional discomfort during the interview were referred to Lifeline SA (Ekurhuleni) and provided with the necessary contact details to seek professional counselling and well-being enhancing services that are free and can be done telephonically or face to face. After the session with Thuli, Zodwa and Sharon, the researcher referred them to this agency to seek



counselling. These three participants seemed the most emotionally affected by their experiences. This service remains confidential, with the client's names and sessions kept confidential.

According to Neuman (2011), permission needed to be granted by the participants before the interview took place. This involved the participants signing a consent form that had been clearly explained. Participants in this study were comfortable with using their names, more specifically their nicknames. Before the interviews could take place, participants were given an information sheet, then a consent form (see appendix A and B). These documents explained what the research topic was about and its aims. Once the participants had read and understood the information provided, they were required to sign the consent form (see appendix A). In so doing, the participants were agreeing that they had read and understood what the study was about and indeed wanted to partake in the study through being interviewed.

### **3.10 Research Strengths and Limitations**

Denzin (cited in Rahman 2017:104) describes the strengths of qualitative research as having the ability to provide a detailed description of the participant's emotions, feelings, opinions and experiences during the interview and further interprets what these actions could possibly mean. According to Rahman (2017), the methods used in qualitative research such as unstructured interviews, direct observations, recording and participant-observation, helped the researcher to interact with the participants on a more direct and personal level.

Another strength of qualitative research was its flexibility, as the questions could be constructed and reconstructed accordingly, which allowed for issues that are complex to be easily understood and did not limit the participants from sharing their experiences (Rahman 2017). The researcher was able to explain the questions and elaborate to the participants as they interacted together. Lastly, qualitative research seemed to have a very good grasp of the human experience. According to Denzin and Lincoln (cited in Rahman 2017:104), "qualitative research is an interdisciplinary field which encompasses a wider range of epistemological viewpoints, research methods, and interpretive techniques of understandings human experiences".



A possible limitation of this qualitative research was that perhaps upon reflection, it could have benefitted a little more from looking into the survival strategies of previous male beneficiaries. The researcher would have loved to interview more participants, especially those who had been out of the system for longer. This would be to assess if that plays a role in how they perceive the social security system since she mostly found participants who had recently been excluded from the Child Support Grant.

### **3.11 Conclusion**

This chapter defined and explained the qualitative research method that this study took and explained how the theoretical framework and qualitative research method suited each other in helping assess how young Black women survive post social grant access. Furthermore, the chapter discussed the selection process of the participants and why purposive and snowball sampling were used in the study. Additionally, the data collection methods that were utilised in the study were discussed in length. For instance, the researcher made use of semi-structured interviews in order to collect data that is valuable and provided rich understanding of the subjective experiences and knowledge of participants (Monette et al., 2005).

The chapter looked at the research site. The data analysis process was also described. The chapter went on to discuss how the researcher reflected and assessed her feelings, thoughts and experiences throughout the research process and what purpose the reflexivity served in the study. The audit trail and the various methods to collect and store data tying to the study was described. The ethical considerations that were considered for the study were also assessed. Lastly, the chapter looked at the strengths and weaknesses of taking on a qualitative research approach. The next chapter will engage in an in-depth discussion of the themes identified from the interviews that were conducted.

## **Chapter 4. Experiences during and post Child Support Grant Access**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the experiences of ten young Black women from the East Rand of Johannesburg, concerning their survival strategies post Child Support Grant access. The chapter looks at the experiences that participants had with being Child Support Grant beneficiaries and further compares those experiences to their lives post Child Support Grant access. Throughout the study, the researcher used a Black Feminist perspective to ensure that the voices and experiences of the participants were central. This is because most studies on the Child Support Grant predominately focused on the experiences of mothers and guardians of the Child Support Grant beneficiaries. Thus, this study assessed how young Black women post grant survive if they are struggling to enter the workspace, tertiary or the grant system again. Through this examination, it can be argued that life post Child Support Grant access is not easy as these young Black women were faced with a number of difficulties that were also factored by race, class and gender.

Through the ten interviews conducted with the participants who are previous beneficiaries of the Child Support Grant and are currently facing unemployment, six themes were identified which will be discussed in depth to make a case for the main argument of the chapter. The first theme identified the family structures that the participants came from. The researcher found this to be crucial as it influenced the ways in which participants went about surviving unemployment and making ends meet. The second theme focused on employment status within the households the participants reside in. The third theme further looked at the experiences faced when seeking employment and how a lack of qualifications, skills and work experience hindered their chances of securing employment. Another theme that emerged looked at the social exclusion and feelings of rejection faced by participants. Lastly, the chapter drew on the various methods employed by participants to survive life post Child Support Grant access. The study found that the survival strategies used ranged from hustling, entering of romantic relationships and working towards furthering their education.

## 4.2 Family dynamics and their impact of life experiences

Lubbe (2008) describes family as being timeless and a forever changing social institution. Similar to this, Sooryamoorthy and Makhoba (2016) state that the South African family has shown changes in its characteristics. Further, Lubbe (2008) states how colonial and apartheid South Africa has affected the institution of the family. This is especially important to note, considering the family structures that exist or those that cease to exist within Black families.

The White Paper on Families in South Africa (2013) describes family as being groups within a society that are related through kinship (blood), marriage, domestic partnerships and adoption, and further reside together in a specific household. This definition has helped families to be seen as having various structures, relationship dynamics, assets and practices. According to Amoateng, Heaton and Kalule-Sabiti (2007), one will notice that South African households have different structures based on factors such as access to housing, education, health and other social and economic factors. Family structures in South Africa within Black families have been affected by poverty, inequality and unemployment (White Paper on Families, 2013).

For instance, if one looks at the structures of Black families in this study, one will see that the concept of the nuclear family hardly exists (Louw and Louw, 2007). Bathabile, who lived with both employed parents and two younger siblings, was the only participant who came from what is considered a nuclear family.

On the other hand, Sharon who is a 22-year-old female and resided with her aunt and other extended family members, had been separated from her two younger brothers, as they did not have a home. Sharon and her siblings had to be separated as a means for various family members to share responsibility and ease the financial constraints. Other participants, such as Zozo and Zodwa who were both 20 years old and Nelly, who was 19 years old stayed at home, with older siblings who were employed and had children of their own. This can be attributed to factors such as access to housing and the convenience of being at home.

Several studies on South Africa have shown that there has been an increase in the number of children being raised in single-mother headed households (lone parent), some children live in households where the parents are unemployed (David and

Roman 2013; Holborn and Eddy 2011; Roman 2011). For instance, Mpumi, Nolwazi and Nelly came from families where their mothers are unemployed, meaning that financial security is compromised somehow. Furthermore, Holborn and Eddy (2011) add that unemployment or financial security may have negative effects on a parent's decision to be absent in their children's life. For instance, this is what Sharon shared;

*I was raised by my mother alone, she is not employed and one day she just decided to go stay with her boyfriend who at the time was working.... I was left with such a big responsibility, to take care of my brothers. Like, instead of being a child and going to school and living my life like other kids. I was forced to grow up and put my dreams aside and try to make things happen so that my brothers and I could survive. (Sharon - 22, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

Sharon's mother who was also a single mother, had decided to move out, leaving her children to go and stay with her partner. This is common practice; as often young mothers leave their children in the care of extended family members when they enter relationships with men who are not the biological fathers of their children. Sharon resided with her maternal aunt and her husband, along with her children and grandmother, as well as her maternal uncle. Sharon thought that her mother's decision was unfair and that it forced her to grow up and take responsibility for herself and her brothers. This included having to find work to support herself and to help in the household she resided in. Sharon felt that her mother leaving delayed her progress in furthering her education and being able to live her life and accomplish her own personal goals. On the other hand, Thuli resides with her paternal aunt along with her uncle, cousins, nieces and nephews. Thuli's mother is deceased and her father lives alone and occasionally checks in on her. This is what she had to say about living with extended family:

*I do not want to live with my father because he is drunk most of the time and that is not the ideal environment to be in... My aunt supports me most of the time and she raised me when my father was absent so I don't see myself living with anyone but her because she knows me better than the rest of the family does. (Thuli - 19, 04<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

From Thuli's statement, it is clear that she felt most comfortable at home with her paternal aunt. This can be attributed to the fact that her father drinks constantly and

Thuli does not wish to reside in such an unstable environment. Despite having grown up around her father, it would seem that their relationship is monetary. Furthermore, no one family is the same or experiences poverty, inequality and unemployment the same despite the similarities they may share. According to Statistics South Africa (2018), extended households make up 36% of households in South Africa. Again, research shows that two in three Black children do not reside with both biological parents. This can be attributed to the effects of poverty and unemployment. According to the general household survey in 2016, Black children were found to be the ones most unlikely to be residing with both parents for various social and economic reasons (Statistics South Africa 2017).

Family dynamics have also had an effect on both Sharon and Pontso in seeking employment, getting an education and their financial statuses. For instance, Sharon has had to find unskilled work in order to save towards furthering her education and helping out her aunt in the household where she could. This is what Sharon shared:

*Whenever I have money or have been working, I am then required to contribute some money at home, or like buy the everyday essentials, such as milk, bread and all. So, like when I get a piece job, I will maybe even buy her kids school lunch things. (Sharon - 22, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

It is common for family members to take each other in and for everyone within the household to have a role to play, be it financially or through assisting with domestic chores. What Sharon seems to be saying here is that she is struggling financially as she is required to make the little money she has stretch and help support her extended family. Pontso also had to work after high school to put aside money for tertiary as her grandmother had already taken her older sister to varsity and no longer had the funds to do the same for Pontso. She said the following:

*I completed my matric I could not go to school because my sister went first and then they told me there was not enough money to put us both through school at once, so I was forced to find employment. (Pontso - 24, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2019).*

Similar to Sharon, Pontso could not go to university, as there was no money for her. However, unlike Sharon she was able to find a job and put money aside towards going to tertiary. The reason for this could be attributed to the fact that both Pontso's grandmother and sister were able to help provide for her essentials and did not

necessarily need her to contribute towards the upkeep of the household. Which was not the case with Sharon.

Two out of the 10 participants came from nuclear families, namely: Zozo and Bathabile. According to Statistics South Africa (2018), about four in every ten households (39%) were reported to be nuclear households. Bathabile, whose mother and father are both employed did not share similar experiences in regarding to finances as the other participants. Bathabile's parents did not expect her to contribute at home, or to seek employment. Bathabile was the only participant who stated not being pressured to get a job to help at home or support herself as her parents were already doing that. Bathabile shared the following:

*At home, my parents do not want me to work yet because they always say that once you start working and get a taste of money, you will not want to go back to school. (Bathabile - 19, 05<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

Bathabile's parents did not want her to get a job and wanted her focus on furthering her education. Bathabile's parents both continued to do everything for her, and they only required her to further her education. This can be attributed to the fact that the parents were not struggling financially and so they did not need her to work. Her mother worked as a nursery school teacher, whilst her father worked as a police officer. Zozo, on the other hand felt like she could not depend on her father to support her financially and spoke about how her father was a wage worker. Fathers are often seen to be the financial providers within households (Freeks 2017; Khunou 2012), and so her father's inability to provide seems to have put a financial strain on the older siblings within that household. This is what Zozo said:

*I do not always ask him for money because I already know what he will say because he only works on Thursdays and Fridays unless he gets extra work. So sometimes I just have to sulk then my mom will notice me. (Zozo - 20, 06<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

Freeks (2017) describes fatherhood as historically being defined based on a man's ability to provide for his family. Which brings into question Zozo's father's ability to provide for his family, as Zozo seems to carry the notion that she is unable to rely on her father, as she already knows he will have a reason not to give her money. The researcher had anticipated that perhaps Zozo would speak about her father's



involvement in the household besides providing love. Williams (2008) speaks of the importance of fathers providing love and attention in their households, which can be seen with Bathabile's father who seems to be involved both financially and emotionally. One can see that she unlike the other participants whose fathers were not involved, she gets to enjoy the advantages that come with having both a mother and father present in the household (Freeks 2017).

In the study, six of the participants came from households where their fathers were not present namely: Mpumi, Nolwazi, Nelly, Pontso, Zodwa, and Thobeka. Nolwazi and Thobeka did not even speak about their father's involvement in their lives. Sharon shared that she had never met her father. According to the Second Living Conditions Survey, 22% of households in South Africa are ran by single mothers (Statistics South Africa 2018). In other words, there is no biological father present within these households. These fathers can be described as being absent fathers, meaning they are not physically residing in the same home or are involved in the lives of the participants mentioned above. This is what Zodwa shared about absent fathers:

*I think that fathers need to be more involved and present in their children's life, because women do not make these children on their own. Therefore, fathers need to start taking care of their kids and pay maintenance for their children.*  
(Zodwa - 20, 05<sup>th</sup> June 2019).

Zodwa said that her father had been absent for most of her childhood and had just recently started making a financial effort in her life. She shared that she thought this was unfair for her mother to have taken on the responsibility. Zodwa felt that fathers needed to be more active and present in the upbringing of their children. Similar to this, Freeks (2017) stated that fathers needed to spend time with their children as children needed and wanted their fathers present.

All the participants seemed to have received some kind of support from their mothers, whether it was on a financial or emotional level. Father absence does not necessarily mean that the father is not present in some way for the child (Nduna and Khunou 2014). Zodwa described her father as only recently starting to be consistently involved in her life financially. She speaks of the financial hardships of growing up with a mother who was single and unemployed, and how things were difficult in the household. More so, she describes her mother as being strong and confident. She said the following:



*Yea, yoh, my mother has a lot of confidence and self-esteem. Like she will even say that she does not care whether or not my dad helps me out because she was able to raise me until I finished school, so nothing will stop her from helping me out. (Zodwa - 20, 06<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

This above experience presented by Zodwa clearly indicates that although her mother managed to raise her and get her to finish her primary and secondary schooling, it was not an easy journey both financially and mentally. However, the problem that comes forth in her mother's statement is the normality that comes with single mothers struggling to raise children. It is seen as an achievement for women to raise their children without the assistance of the fathers who are alive. Historical and contemporary persistence of inequality, poverty and race in Black communities is important in understanding how Black mothers have managed to remain resilient during hardships despite underemployment, unemployment and low incomes (Mendenhall, Bowman and Zhang 2013).

#### **4.3 Making Ends Meet: Families sticking together**

Employment can be defined in various ways; however, the internationally accepted definition is that employment entails "all persons above a specific age who during a specified period, either one week or one day, were in paid employment or self-employment. The qualification for being 'at work' is having performed some work for a wage or salary in cash or in kind" (ILO 2007:04). What this definition means in this study is that within the households of the participants and for the participants themselves, they have held some kind of employment within the household, through domestic chores and assisting with their nieces/nephews or siblings in exchange for money.

Similar to this, a study done in 1989 on Black students found that they too survived through paid and unpaid labour from family members as well as through sharing of resources, which include income and shelter (Bozalek 1999). In each household that the participants resided in, there was some kind of income that came in apart from the Child Support Grant. For instance, Sharon's maternal aunt and her husband are both employed, her grandmother is a beneficiary of the older persons grant whilst her maternal uncle is unemployed. This is what she Sharon shared:

*My uncle on the other is just a lazy drunkard who does not really do much, but drink. He does not bother anyone so no one pays much attention to him.*  
(Sharon - 22, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2019).

In as much as family members are expected to contribute to the functioning of a household, we see here that Sharon's uncle does not contribute because of his mental status. Therefore, instead of him contributing in the household, the reciprocal care is given to him in that he cannot be thrown into the streets as he is family and needs to be cared for as well. However, it can also be said that Sharon's uncle does not reciprocate any kind of assistance within the family, as he does not help or contribute in anyway. This can be seen in Sharon's family through her unemployed uncle, who because he is a male, is not expected to take on the care work activities so those are left to Sharon and her grandmother, as her maternal aunt and her husband are the breadwinners. According to Statistics South Africa (2018) and Sullivan (1997), women are most likely to be involved in unpaid work through dedicating their time to performing care work activities. On another hand, Thobeka's mother is also a breadwinner through running her own business, in which she sells alcohol and runs a tavern in her yard in order to earn a living. This is what Thobeka shared:

*My mother is not employed; she is just a shebeen queen, who sells alcohol in our backyard tavern.* (Thobeka - 21, 06<sup>th</sup> June 2019).

When asked if her mother was employed, Thobeka answered no, despite her mother running a success business. Thobeka did not consider her mother's way of bringing an income as a profession or a job. A number of women in the labour force are often involved in unskilled work as such domestic work or clerk work (International Labour Organization, 2016). A number of the participants' parents were not in formal employment, so they can be seen as partaking in survivalist activities (Alexander et al., 2013). For instance, Thuli's paternal aunt is a beneficiary of the old age pension grant and works as a domestic worker for her sibling to receive an extra income. Her father is a wage worker and relies on piece jobs. As a result, he does not have a steady income. However, he rents out his back rooms.

*My father lives alone with people who are renting his backrooms.* (Thuli -19, 04<sup>th</sup> June 2019).

Due to the fact that Thuli's father is not formally employed and relies on doing odd informal jobs to make an income, he has also built a few backrooms in his yard in which he rents out to people for an extra income. It is with this income that he contributes to Thuli's upbringing. Nelly's mother who is also unemployed rents out her backrooms for income. Similar to Thuli's father is Zozo's father who relies on piece jobs for an income. Her mother is unemployed and her siblings are all employed and contribute to the household financially. Zozo said the following:

*My sisters' kids are also earning the Child Support Grant, which my sisters use to give to my mother to do as she sees fits for the household. So everyone basically comes together to contribute towards grocery and all. (Zozo - 20, 06<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

Zozo can be seen as describing what is known as black tax, in which according to Ndinga- Kanga (2019), describes the burden of remittances that employed children in low-income and poverty-stricken families have to provide. According to Falco and Bulte (2011), the need for Black people to help look after family members is not any unique and is referred to as "family tax". This is done in order to combat poverty and for their family members to survive as well. Similarly, a participant in the study of *Class in Soweto* described how everyone in his household had a responsibility to make things happen in order for them to make ends meet (Alexander et al., 2013). Similarly, Zodwa said the following:

*Well we survive through my sister's salary and her children's grant money which she gives to my mother to figure out what is needed in the house. So yea that is how we live. (Zodwa - 20, 06<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

Most of the participants in the study also shared similar notions that indicated that their families survived on more than one income, which is usually that of the employed siblings. Take for instance how Zodwa's mother is unemployed and depends on her eldest daughters' salary and grandchildren's grant money to make ends meet in the household. As a result, Zodwa's eldest sister, along with her children reside in the family home along with Zodwa and their mother. This can be seen as means to ensure that she is able to help out at home and the sister also does not have to spend on getting extra support to help with raising her children, as the grandmother and Zodwa are available. Therefore, as much as the eldest sister contributes a great deal to their

survival, Zodwa and her mother also contribute to the household through unpaid caring work (Bozalek, 1999). Additionally, the mother is renting out a portion of her property in order to further make ends meet.

Similar to Zodwa, Mpumi's mother is also unemployed and her eldest sister is employed. Mpumi's sister works as a qualified Social Worker at SASSA and is the one who contributes financially in the household. Nelly's mother is unemployed and she has two older siblings who live at home with their children. Both siblings are employed and contribute to household expenses. Pontso's eldest sister is the only one who holds employment in the household and takes care of the household, since the passing of their grandmother. She said:

*So right now I have adjusted and we living off of my sister's salary. (Pontso - 24, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2019).*

Pontso, whose sister is a current Masters student and just started her first full time job is now the sole provider in their household. This means that she has now become responsible for all the household expenses as they reside in their late grandmother's home. Furthermore, Pontso's sister is also responsible for helping her sister out whilst she tries to pursue a degree. Ndinga- Kanga (2019) speaks about the set-back that taking financial care of the extended family creates for young black professionals who are sending remittances as compared to other races who do not need to help out financially at home.

A common similarity that the participants who have older working siblings seemed to share was that the older siblings were employed and were financially responsible for providing in their childhood homes. Even more so, these older siblings also played a role in helping their younger siblings (the participants) in making ends meet for them financially. It is clear that older siblings play a great role in the survival of the households that the participants reside in, which is similar to what Alexander et al., (2013) said with regards to how the earnings and opportunities of other family members within each household directly influences the life chances and standards of those unemployed in the household.

Furthermore, the contribution of older siblings and at times the participants to the household can be described as Black tax. Mugabane (2017) defines Black tax as the financial obligation that Black people have towards family members as a result of

inequality, poverty and unemployment caused by the apartheid government. Mhlungu (2015) also states that Black tax is the direct cost of inequality. For instance, when Pontso eventually finishes her degree and is employed she may have to take on the responsibility of putting her niece through university, whose mother is Pontso's eldest sister, who passed away years ago. The cycle of Black tax will continue so long as gender inequality, poverty and unemployment are not addressed adequately and realistically. Bozalek (1999) describes this differently and calls it reciprocal care, in which everyone in a household is expected to contribute within a household however they can. Essentially, according to Bozalek (1999), older siblings are not paying Black Tax but are rather helping others and continuing a cycle of support and assistance within the family in other words "I scratch your back and you scratch mine" for the better good of the family.

Looking at Bathabile who is the eldest child to parents who are both employed, her mother works as nursery school teacher, whilst her father works as a police officer. This makes them a middle-class family with two stable monthly incomes. One can see that being unemployed does not necessary affect her as she is not expected to contribute financially. This is what she had to say:

*For now, working isn't something I am looking at, I just want to go to school and further my studies. (Bathabile - 19, 05<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

It can be said that when one's family members are considered to be well off and employed, the pressure or expectations for participants to get jobs are not a priority as the family members would not need the extra income, which is the case with Bathabile. Although she does not describe herself as well off, she is not expected to work and help out at home as both parents are employed and thus there is no pressure for her to contribute towards meeting the basic everyday needs for herself or her family. Whereas the other participants who predominately come from single headed households are expected to find work in order to help contribute. For these participants, staying at home is an expense and enrolling them in tertiary is another expense.

#### 4.3.1 Experiences of seeking employment as a young Black woman with no qualifications

Graham and Mlatsheni (2015) describe youth who come from poverty-stricken homes as having to face uncertainty when they exit the education and social grant systems. This can be seen as true from the experiences that the participants face when seeking employment, and how they are currently all unemployed and have no income after exiting the schooling and social grant systems. What makes it so hard for the participants to find employment is the lack of access to both financial and social capital. The participants who took part in the study were all unemployed young Black women.

These participants did not decide to be unemployed by choice but rather because of various circumstances. Participants shared their experiences with job seeking and most of them seemed to share similar experiences with the process of seeking employment. One challenge that hindered their job seeking process was that of funds for transport. Sharon, Zodwa, Zozo, Thuli, Nolwazi, Nelly and Thobeka shared that whenever they were job seeking, they would try to look around areas within a walking distance from home because they did not have the funds to go into town and look for work. Pontso for instance, shared that there were times that she could not get to an interview because she did not have the money for transportation. Pontso said the following:

*Yea... I really had to take that into consideration, so for instance I would never take job interviews that were in Pretoria or in the South or North as well because it was just too far from home. Because I also have to take into consideration if I got the job how much would I spend on transportation every month. (Pontso - 24, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2019).*

Here we see what Kon and Lackan (2008) spoke of with regards to how Black women have been affected by both their social positioning and geographical locations. Due to where Pontso lived, she had to be cognisant of distance and transportation costs as well as to take her safety into consideration whenever she looked for employment. This essentially restricted where she could look for employment. The other participants shared the same concerns and experiences when they looked for work. Graham and Mlatsheni (2015) state that the high cost of transportation in South Africa has



contributed a great deal to unemployment. Furthermore, they state that this is both a consequence of the apartheid and post-apartheid governments' urban planning, as it has been designed in such a way that the majority of poor and Black low skilled live far from potential job opportunities, hence the challenge of transportation (Graham and Mlatsheni 2015).

The fact that the participants did not have the required funds to go look for work put them at a real disadvantage in accessing opportunities that would promote real growth and career development. Access to funds also means being able to access the internet cafés, where participants can look for opportunities, apply and also print out any necessary documents needed when applying. Zozo said the following:

*It's not like I can always be up and about looking for work because that requires money for transport and clothes and nice hair and money to print out the CV's.*  
(Zozo - 20, 06<sup>th</sup> June 2019).

Zozo found it to be a constant struggle to look for work because she did not have money to put aside for transport, as she also had to print out her CVs and look presentable to increase her chances of employment. This was difficult as she did not have any money coming in, and when she did get some money, she often had to prioritize it and use it for her everyday essentials. Patel (2005) speaks of poverty as preventing people from being able to actively participate in activities that could alleviate them from poverty. This can be seen to be the case with Zozo who was limited in where she could look for work, as she did not have the means to get there, and had no access to the information for possible opportunities.

Similar to Zozo, the other participants shared that they experienced the same challenges of not having resources in their homes to type out CVs nor did they have data to surf the internet to look for work suitable to them. Graham and Mlatsheni (2015) state that young people who specifically reside in areas that are disadvantaged such as the townships are forced to use the internet cafes, however the challenge is that they do not have the money to access these facilities in order to search for work. Considering that none of them were employed and had no steady monthly allowance, seeking employment was a lot more challenging, as they did not have the means to actively seek employment.



#### 4.3.2 Being unemployed: Experiencing rejection and being a burden

Participants shared that they experienced a lot of rejection when seeking employment. It was worth noting that most of this rejection came from other employees that worked at the places or companies that the participants were seeking employment. Thobeka shared how she witnessed an employee at a butchery where she had gone to drop off her CV dispose it into the dustbin. She said:

*Last week I went to Kempton Park and went to the butcheries and when I arrived at the butchery, I asked if they were taking CVs and he said yes. But rather than telling me that they aren't taking any people right now, he took my CV and threw in the trash. (Thobeka - 21, 06<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

When Thobeka shared this, she looked hurt by what the employee at this butchery did. Taking into consideration the efforts and resources she had put in getting to Kempton Park and printing the CV, it was a blow to both her finances and self-esteem that someone could just dispose of it. Creed (2001) spoke of how unemployment negatively affected the psychological well-being of young individuals seeking work. Employers also need to take into consideration the feelings and dignity of individuals seeking work, and to be mindful of treating them with respect. However, as seen above, this was not the case. This can be attributed to inequality, where people, especially Black women are not treated or given equal opportunities to improve their lives. The researcher asked the participants if they ever followed up with the places they had applied for work to find out why they had not gotten the job. Most of the participants had not followed up. Nolwazi said the following:

*No, I never do ... I mean what is the point in that... they probably just throw my CV away and do not even remember me. (Nolwazi - 19, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019).*

It would seem that to avoid further rejection, Nolwazi does not follow up on her applications. Although she may be right in saying her CV was thrown away, this is not always the case. According to Rankin and Roberts (2011), youth who are seeking employment sometimes have unrealistic expectations of the kinds of jobs they actually qualify for and what they can actually earn. As a result, they end up applying for jobs for which they will face rejection. At times, they do not even have the correct or adequate information on the best approach to take when seeking employment. Being

rejected has led to participants feeling discouraged to seek employment. Speaking to this is Graham and Mlatsheni (2015) who state that data has also shown the increase in youth being discouraged to look for work. As discussed in chapter 2, being unemployed can have negative psychological effects.

This is especially true because seeking employment is an important milestone in the development of an individual when transitioning into adulthood (Mlatsheni and Leibbrandt 2011). Therefore, if you look at the rejection that participants have faced when seeking employment, one can see how this can and has had an impact on their self-esteem. As a result, all participants shared how they felt like burdens at home, which Barker (2000) describes as unemployed youth feeling useless and being stagnated. These feelings seemed to stem from having to depend on family members financially, who were already burdened by other family responsibilities. Nelly, shared feelings of being a burden at home, more especially to her siblings, who were helping at home and had kids of their own to take care of. This is what she said:

*I feel like I am such a burden to my siblings. Because they are always busy working and having to take care of their kids and help out in the house and I am just sitting at home. (Nelly - 19, 04<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

Nelly found herself in a position where she was struggling to find employment despite actively looking. As a result, this has affected the way in which she sees herself. It would also seem that she feels guilty for “just sitting” at home whilst her siblings work and contribute financially. Nelly has taken on the primary role of doing the care work and helping out with her nieces and nephews. However, this is often not acknowledged or seen as real work in households. It is rather seen as reciprocal care, in which everyone helps where they can (Bozalek 1999). Zodwa on the other hand found it difficult to ask her mother for money, as she felt like a burden when she did. This is what Zodwa had to say:

*Yoh, it is really hard being unemployed hey. Because you find yourself constantly having to ask people for money all the time. And it is not like you ask for help because you like too, but you do it because you see times are tough and you have no options. As if I do not like having to depend on anyone and especially have to feel like I am a burden and a bore on people. Like even when*

*you call people it feels like they already know what you want (Zodwa - 20, 06<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

Zodwa's reservations about asking her mother for money could be because she knew her mother was unemployed and may not have had extra money to spare. Zodwa also wanted to be independent and not have to rely on anyone to take care of her. Being employed provides the youth with the opportunity to be independent, which is very important for their development as this gives them the ability to make their own decisions and not have to rely on others (De Witte et al., 2012; Mlatsheni and Liebbrant, 2011; Fryer 1986). More research still needs to be conducted within a South African context on how unemployment and poverty affect the youth, and if it can be attributed to any mental disorders. This has already been done in countries such as Sweden and Australia, which both found that unemployment amongst their youth has been associated with symptoms of depression and low levels of confidence (Lund, Kleintjies, Campbell-Hall, Mjadu, Petersen, Bhana, Kakuma, Mlanjeni, Bird, Drew, Faydi, Funk, Green, Omar and Flisher 2008; Morrel, Taylor and Kerr 1998; Hammarstrom and Janlert 1997).

#### **4.4 Education: Is it the right key to employment?**

The participants who took part in the study did not have any tertiary qualifications. Half of the participants were in the process or had previously attempted to rewrite their grade 12 as they had failed one or more subjects. This hindered their progress in either furthering their education at a tertiary institution or finding employment in the labour market. Young people are seen to be affected by unemployment in South Africa because of the high demand for skilled employees (Graham and Mlatsheni 2015). More so, employers are now demanding a grade 12 qualification for unskilled positions and require employees to have previous work experience (Altman 2007). Sharon shared how she experienced rejection from possible employers when she took her CV to the various places of work, as she did not meet the required criteria. Sharon shared the following:

*Well, I am still open to finding any work. My only setback is that most places of employment require you to have experience or more than just a matric certificate. (Sharon - 22, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

Sharon, who has been actively looking for work found it difficult to find work as most work places require years of work experience or tertiary qualifications, of which she has neither. This is because most people who are in the transition of exiting school to finding work do not have any prior experience of employment, as they were students. Therefore, this transition has left the participants in a state of limbo, as they neither have the skills nor qualifications required to compete in the labour market. They also do not have the finances to further their education. Not having the relevant skills, support systems and work experiences makes it hard for the participants to smoothly transition from school to work. Like Sharon, Zozo also spoke about how she did not have the skills to apply for most work that was available and that this further limited her job opportunities. Zozo said the following:

*Because I know, I do not have experience I am not too picky, so long as I can get a job you know. I usually just check on Facebook, or google. I even ask around you know and try to find out if people do not know where they are looking for people. That is pretty much my process. (Zozo - 20, 06<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

Zozo like the other participants who had tried to seek employment felt that she was not in a position to be specific about the kind of job she wanted because opportunities for her were limited due to her lack of experience and qualifications. This speaks to the demand for higher skilled labour within the workplace. According to Graham and Mlatsheni (2015), the demand for high skilled labour is a lot higher than the number of young people seeking employment in South Africa. This in turn has had a negative impact on the youth in South Africa, young Black women being the most vulnerable (Graham and Mlatsheni 2015). This can be seen in the study, as all of the ten Black female participants were unemployed and struggled to find employment.

The participants are also at a disadvantage because in addition to the lack of experience, they also do not have the necessary information on how to go about seeking and applying for work. Furthermore, participants like other youth living in the townships do not have access to “social capital”. Social capital according to Graham and Mlatsheni (2015) are networks that can be utilised to gain access to information in the labour market. It can be said that the way in which the South African labour market is set up, along with factors such as poverty, gender inequality and racial

discrimination that affect the participants, the participants have been placed at a huge disadvantage in competing fairly in the labour market.

Survival can be described as engaging in anything one can do in order to improve their current financial situation. The participants who have attempted to enter the labour market after secondary school found that a well-paying job was not easy to get if one has no work experience and no tertiary education. At the time of interviewing, participants were either waiting on their grade 12 rewrite results or had taken a break from repeating grade 12 due to failing several times, or had enrolled in local tertiary institutions and waiting to hear their status. Participants all agreed that furthering their education was the best decision they could make if they wanted to improve their lives. Nelly said the following:

*After I got my matric results, I went to Springs College to apply. When I got there, they told me that the hospitality course that I wanted to do was filled. Then I went to Permont. I got there a bit late and they told me that there is no space for me but I can apply for next year. And then they told me that they will open a new campus in Kempton Park and when it opens, they will send me a text message to go there and apply to that one and apply, because that one would be closer to me anyway because the other is so far. (Nelly - 19, 04<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

Nelly struggled with passing her grade 12 and due to money constraints; she had to think of other alternatives to further her education. Despite having shared that, she felt like a burden, as she was working towards and making plans of furthering her education by enrolling at a tertiary institution. She did however have trouble in the process. As she said in the quote above, it was already fully registered and she has been placed on a waiting list to apply at a new campus. Nelly, like the other participants believed that by having the necessary qualifications, they would increase their chances of getting employment. Although the road to furthering her education had not been a smooth sailing and straightforward process, she still believed that it would increase employment opportunities. Thobeka had also failed her grade 12 after several rewrites. This is what Thobeka said:

*I failed my matric and went to go write a supplementary exam at first which I failed and then I failed the second supplementary and then I failed again and*

*supplemented again and failed again. And then I just stayed at home and took a break. But next year I am going to a college to get my NQF 4 and to study to become a nursery school teacher. (Thobeka - 21, 05<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

The several attempts to rewrite but with no success took a knock on her self-esteem. Hence, she opted to take a different route in furthering her education. She had enrolled at a nursery school to work as an assistant, to get her NQF level 4, and work her way up from there. Taking into consideration that the participants attended free government public schools that did not have access to all the necessary tools, one can go back to the importance of social capital (Graham and Mlatsheni 2015). It is very crucial that learners are guided in grade 9 in choosing the correct subjects that are aligned with their learning capabilities and career aspirations. The participants, who were repeating or upgrading their grade 12 were mostly upgrading subjects such as pure mathematics and sciences. Unlike the other participants, Zodwa shared that during her high school years she had not thought of furthering her education. She said the following:

*If I am being honest, I never even started the process of applying to universities or even colleges. But having been in the hood and doing nothing all day has made me realise that if I want a better future I need to go to school and make something of myself. (Zodwa - 20, 06<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

With struggling to find employment to bring in a stable income as well as to provide for her own needs and wants, Zodwa started to think that going to school was a better option. Although getting a tertiary qualification does not guarantee you a job, it does put you in a better competing position for work. This can be seen from the experiences shared by participants such as Zodwa, who did not meet the required criteria when she was looking for employment. Zodwa further described being home and unemployed as having been a wakeup call for her to make ends meet and further her education. On the other hand, Thuli wanted to go to a private tertiary institution but found that NSFAS and other bursaries do not sponsor private institutions. As a result, she was now in the process of upgrading her marks in order to increase her chances of getting into a public tertiary institution and qualifying for a bursary. She shared the following:



*I'm still applying for bursaries – since those two tertiary institutions have accepted me - so I still need a bursary to fund my studies. (Thuli - 19, 04<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

This very incident indicates the importance of having access to information. If Thuli had the necessary social capital whilst she was still in secondary school, she would have known how funding works with regards to pursuing her tertiary education in both private and public institutions. She would have been able to make the right decisions that could have enabled her to apply in time. As opposed to the steps, she now had to upgrade her marks so that she could apply at a public institution for the same course that she had wanted to do at a private institution.

#### **4.5 Life as a Child Support Grant Beneficiary**

The Child Support Grant has primarily been aimed and targeted at contributing to the needs of children who are less fortunate financially. Research conducted over the years on these Child Support Grants suggests that women (caregivers, aunts, grandmothers or mothers) who collect these grants on behalf of the children also benefit from the grant in one way or another (Wright et al., 2015). Goldblatt (2005) describes women as having to take on the role of the mediator of social assistance for the government. Acceding with this is Mokoene and Khunou (2019) who state that the Child Support Grant does not only care for the needs of the child but further helps to provide for the entire household.

According to Patel, Hochfeld, Moodley and Mutwali (2012), the Child Support Grant gives women the ability to make financial decisions for their children and their households. This is because they apply for it, claim and collect it on the children's behalf. Furthermore, these women are often the ones who decide how best to use the money in order for it to cover expenses such as food, shelter, clothing and education among other aspects that contribute to a child's growth, as well as for the overall maintenance of the family and household.

Similar to most studies done on how the Child Support Grant is used, the participants said that their mothers used the money on food, school uniforms and other school related fees (Patel and Hochfeld 2011). Zodwa, Sharon and Pontso were amongst some of the participants who had no say in how the money was spent. Their caregivers

decided on how to spend the money for the better good of running the household. Zodwa is quoted saying the following:

*My grant money on the other hand was being used to pay the funeral policies and stokvels and all those other insurances that my mother has taken out. She would only give me like R50. From that R50, I am expected to buy myself pads and maybe do my hair and even use that money to buy snacks at school. Like do you see how unrealistic that was and like I was forced to prioritise what I do so that it can last me throughout the month. (Zodwa - 20, 06<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

Zodwa's mother used the grant money to pay for funeral policies. This is very similar to a study that Patel and Hochfeld (2011) conducted where they found that the Child Support Grant benefited mothers as they were able to participate in social activities such saving groups (stokvels), burial societies and church societies. The participants felt like they did not have any freedom to decide how the grant money was utilised. The problem here lies in the fact that most beneficiaries and parents do not understand that money does not necessarily belong to the child per say, but rather is intended for their benefit and the greater good of the family. This is why the mother has to collect it as it is believed that the care giver is in a better position to decide how best the money can be spent.

Furthermore, the participants felt like they could not ask for the grant money because they were children and were not in a position to make such demands. They did however account for the money and said that it was used for the better good of the family. It is important to note that despite not having the freedom to decide what to do with the money, the participants agreed that their mothers were still able to provide and budget for them. This is why when the grant money stopped, it had a huge negative impact on the households' budgets. This money clearly contributed a lot, as seen in the case of Nelly. She turned 18 years whilst in her final year of secondary school, and she was forced to move in with other relatives to be closer to school, since the grant had stopped and there was no money for transportation. This is what she said:

*When the grant stopped paying I had to move out of the home, to a place that is closer to school so that I can walk to school, because I no longer had the grant so I no longer had money. I couldn't force my parents to try and get me*

*transport money and do even illegal things to get me the money so I had to understand that, I no longer have the Child Support Grant so I have to move from home to somewhere else. (Nelly - 19, 04<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

The Child Support Grant as mentioned, is provided to children up until the month that they turn 18 years old. After this, they are automatically removed from the system as beneficiaries. What this policy has failed to account for is that although the expected age for a child to complete secondary school is 18, it is not always the case. Additionally, all the participants shared that they thought the grant money was insufficient in covering all their basic needs, and believed that regardless of that, the money did indeed play a huge role in their homes. These views are similar to those of a study that was conducted on the experiences that mothers who collected the grant had (Patel et al., 2013).

All ten participants spoke to the fact that the Child Support Grant was inadequate for meeting their costs and placed emphasis on how helpful it was, and that it was better than nothing as it helped to improve their lives (Wright, Neves, Nsthongwana and Noble 2015). Thuli was given her grant money to decide what to do with it. Despite this, she was still required to ensure that the money was used to cover their basic needs transport, pocket money, toiletries and hair. This is what she shared:

*My grant money contributed towards school lunch, toiletries, school trips and other essential things. It was not easy to have to spend it on my essentials but it taught me to be independent and responsible. (Thuli - 19, 04<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

Looking at the above, one can see that although Thuli was given the grant money, it was expected that it helps her to buy her essentials and in turn, that helped the family in that it lessened the household expenses and reduced the financial burden on her aunt. Thuli's aunt who is an old age grant beneficiary is required to take care of herself, her children and extended family members including Thuli from her old age grant. By giving Thuli the Child Support Grant money, it could be seen as her aunt's way of teaching her the value of money and how to use it wisely. Thuli shared that having control of the Child Support Grant forced her to learn to be responsible as well as ensured that she did not use it recklessly. Zozo on the other hand, believed her mother was the reckless one with her Child Support Grant money. She said the following:

*My mother is so wasteful, like she does not know how to use money in a responsible manner, like for instance if she isn't getting into debts with buying items we do not really need she is always drinking. Like my mother always has alcohol to drink whether or not we have money or we do not have bread, she will always make a plan to have alcohol you know... And my sisters work nne and she always waits for my sister's kids grant money in order for her to do things for the house. Her money is for stokvel and alcohol... so you see... (Zozo - 20, 06<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

Zozo argued that her mother used the Child Support Grant money very irresponsibly and that she never got to benefit from it in the manner that she thought was best for her. She would have wanted to use it for purchasing clothes and having pocket money when she went to school. Sharon shared similar views and believed that if she had been in a position to have a say in what happens to the Child Support Grant money, she could have used it a lot wiser than her mother did. Similar to this, Zodwa also wished she was given the grant money to use for her own benefit. However, none of these participants were ever brave enough to raise the issue with their mothers. This is what Zodwa shared:

*I used to even think or wish that my mother would have given me at least R300 for the month so that I also could have pocket money like other students at school you know. (Zodwa - 20, 06<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

The misconception lies in that most Child Support Grant beneficiaries like the participants are under the impression that the money belongs to them, and that they therefore have the right to the money and to decide how to spend it. This however is not the case. According to the Department of Social Development, the money is meant to be a mitigation strategy to alleviate poverty in poverty-stricken homes (Mokoene and Khunou 2019). The assumption is also that children are not mature enough to make wise decisions with money, and that caregivers are often the ones who have their best interests at heart and essentially know what their needs are. In accordance with this, Patel et al., (2012) found that caregivers responsible for the Child Support Grant used the money for the benefit of the entire household and not just for the child, and that this had an overall positive outcome for the households. It is clear based on

Zodwa's statement above that she would not have used the money to benefit everyone in the household but for her own personal fulfilment.

#### 4.5.1 Life after having access to the Child Support Grant

The Child Support Grant is discontinued when beneficiaries turn 18 years old. This made things difficult for participants such as Nelly, who turned 18 in February at the beginning of the school year and was forced to move because she still had to attend school, but no longer had money for transportation. What was clear was that life after the Child Support Grant access came with various challenges, which required participants to make changes or sacrifices. For instance, most of them had short hair and deemed this a sacrifice, as they could no longer afford to continuously plait, straighten or style their hair. They also felt they had to sacrifice having social lives as they did not have the necessary resources to adequately participate. Thobeka shared the following:

*Because my mother used to give me my money to buy my essentials, when I stopped earning the grant I felt like I lost my independence because I now had to ask her for it. (Thobeka - 21, 06<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

Thobeka felt that she could no longer depend on herself, as she no longer received the grant and was forced to depend on her mother. This according to De Witte et al., (2012) has negative psychological effects on young individuals. This is because when one loses or lacks income, their ability to be independent vanishes and this further affects their ability to make their own lifestyle decisions (Fryer 1986). Pontso felt indifferent because she felt that so many years had gone by and she had learnt how to survive without the money from the grant. Mpumi also felt that life goes on and that there were other means to continue to survive. This is what Mpumi said:

*When you get you know that it is going to come to an end when you turn 18, so it is not like I was surprised when I turned 18 and it stopped. Life goes on and I got used to it and there are other ways to make money. (Mpumi -19, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019).*

Perhaps because Mpumi's mother had other means to make money and had a sister who was employed as a Social Worker, she did not necessarily need the money in

comparison to the other participants who had no one in their households with a stable income. Her statement was precise in that when one signs up for the grant they are well aware that it is meant to support a child until the age of 18. The grant ends at 18 because according to the South African Constitution, any person over the age of 18 is considered an adult and is therefore capable of making their own decisions and to provide for themselves (Constitution of South Africa, 1994). This however is not always the case, as 18-year olds are still found in secondary school and still reside under the care of their parents. Zodwa, whose sister had children on the Child Support Grant, felt that those children's income now contributed in their homes and essentially "replaced" her. This is what she said:

*My sister's kids have replaced my space in terms of helping cover the insurances you know. So, it is also not like the grant money was ever for me. So my mother is still able to cover her expenses. (Zodwa - 20, 06<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

As previously stated, studies have mostly focused on the experiences of mothers and caregivers whose children are beneficiaries of the Child Support Grant, but not so much on the experiences the beneficiaries themselves. It is clear now why studies focus on the experiences of the mothers and caregivers. Based on the findings with the participants, most of them do not have access or any decision-making power with regards to how the Child Support Grant is utilised, as the mothers are the ones who decide on how the money will be used for the greater good of the household. This proves what previous studies have found on how the Child Support Grant has a ripple effect in that it not only improves the lives of women but of the children and their entire households (UNICEF 2006; Kabeer 1994). Take for instance how Zodwa, Zozo, Nolwazi and Bathabile's mothers still continue to depend on the child grants for either of their other children or grandchildren and still make the decisions as to how the child grant will be distributed in the household.

#### **4.5.2 Making ends meet without guarantees**

Participants were asked to provide a brief breakdown of their monthly expenses. Some of the similar expenses they shared were those of airtime, toiletries, transport and clothes. However, either when assessing how much money participants received from their parents, siblings, for helping in the household, or from romantic partners, the



amounts did not add up. The money they received did not match the monthly expenses they claimed to have. What is worth noting is that in most of the households, the participants stopped receiving a monthly allowance when they stopped going to school. This could have been attributed to the fact that money was perhaps allocated to other household expenses. The researcher asked Nolwazi how she met her monthly expenses. At first she did not seem forthcoming and stated that her friends help her out, but eventually she said that her 27-year-old boyfriend helps her out. Nolwazi said the following:

*Okay, okay fine, my boyfriend is the one who gives me money...* (Nolwazi - 19, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019).

Initially Nolwazi was very hesitant in stating that her boyfriend helped her out financially, and instead claimed that her female friends helped her maintain her lifestyle. The researcher attributed this hesitation to the age difference that existed between Nolwazi, who is 19 and her partner who is 27 years old. Similar to her story was Zodwa's, who also received assistance from her boyfriend and her father. She stated this:

*Huh, my father tries to give me R500 when he remembers and has not spent it all on his girlfriends.* (Zodwa - 20, 06<sup>th</sup> June 2019).

Additionally, Zodwa also makes some money through helping out with the household chores. This could be because she knows that her father may not give her money every month and so she has to constantly have an alternative plan. Similar to the participants from the 'Class in Soweto', participants in this study do casual labour such as doing the laundry for family members and their children. Sharon said that she also did laundry for outsiders (Alexander et al., 2013). Zozo contributes by babysitting her older sibling's children while she goes to work, in the hopes that she will be financially compensated at the end of the month. This is what she had to say:

*I have to rely on waiting on my sister to babysit for her and it's not a guaranteed and you know it's a little frustrating to have to stay home and do nothing at all.* (Zozo - 20, 06<sup>th</sup> June 2019).

According to Bozalek (1999), students who participated in her study stated that where there are children in Black families, those children are expected to contribute by helping other family members through paid and unpaid labour. Similar to this is Zozo, who is considered a child in her family and is unemployed. She and her mother are expected to contribute through unpaid labour, which involves cleaning and helping her sister with the children. However, because there was no formal agreement that Zozo would take on the role of the caregiver for her sister's children, there is no formal payment plan. Her sister would give her money when she could, as a way to say "thank you". However, despite Zozo's expectation to receive money from her sister, it is important to note that formal agreements never really take place amongst family members. The general agreement is often that those family members who do not work will stay home and take on the childcare and domestic chores whilst the employed family members will help support the household financially (Bozalek 1999). This explains why Zozo's sister does not pay her monthly for taking care of her children as she helps support Zozo in other ways.

Unlike her mother who receives her grandchildren's grant money every month and is able to plan and work around that, Zozo is unable to have stable budget as she has no stable income. Nelly was the only participant who made her money through a small business initiative. This is what she said:

*When working with Table Charms, you don't get paid much. In a month, I sometimes am paid around R300. It usually depends on the sales I manage to make. Sometimes I got to a potential customer and they tell me that they already have the whole Table Charm set, or that they do not have the money to pay for their order. (Nelly - 19, 04<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

Table Charm, as Nelly explained is more or less similar to the concept of selling Tupperware or Avon. This form of business requires that Nelly network with the women in her neighbourhood in order to build a clientele. However, she shared that this business came with some disadvantages. She expressed that sometimes clients would place orders and upon delivery, they did not have the money for the products, which affects her final payment to the supplier. Nelly also shared that she does not really make much money as the profits still need to be split with her seniors and the actual company that provides the stock.

One clear thing was that Nelly did not have a steady income, and that she relied on a number of things in order to access money to meet her monthly expenses. It is also important to note that one of the reasons that can be attributed to participants no longer being given money is that, the money is now being used towards other household expenses since the participants no longer have access to the Child Support Grant.

Participants did not have any formal or constant source of income and therefore, it was not guaranteed that they would receive any money to meet their monthly needs and wants. Whenever participants received more money than anticipated they would save that money for the next month, just in case they would not be as lucky in the next month. The Financial Literacy (2008) describes saving as an act in which people put away a portion of their money in order to achieve certain financial goals. It also states that women are good at saving. For instance, when Pontso worked at a popular food store, she was able to save money. When she then stopped working, she had some savings. This is what she said:

*Being unemployed it really taught me to respect money. And by that I mean that it taught me the importance of saving and putting money away as well as using money wisely and not just for entertainment and food you know. (Pontso - 24, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2019).*

It is evident that Pontso understood the importance of putting away money and using it sparingly. The act of saving was a very important survival strategy that the participants practiced. Pontso along with the other participants shared that they saved in order to ensure that the little they had could be stretched for long periods. Women are often considered to know and value the importance of saving and sticking to a budget (Financial Literacy, 2008). This can be seen as true in that the participants were all able to account for what their monthly expenditures were. However, when one does not have a steady and regular income, it makes it very hard for them to save, because you cannot really save something you do not have or something you are not guaranteed to receive. Not having steady incomes affected the participant's abilities to save in the long term.

#### 4.5.3 Too broke to fit in

According to Veblen (cited in Mood and Jonsson 2016), what people consume and purchase, for example, clothing, property, places they frequent, what and where they eat, in essence defines who they are, which group they wish to belong in and how others view them. Participants in the study all spoke about how their social lives were either non-existent or very minimal. This was attributed to the fact that they felt like they did not have enough clothes and could not afford to have their hair styled in the latest hair trends. Eight out of ten of the participants had short hair, and felt like that was a sacrifice they needed to make in order to deal with their lack of income. This seemed to affect their self-esteem, what people thought of them and the pressure of wanting to fit in to societal expectations of having nice hair and clothes. Nolwazi shared the following:

*Yoh I am always stressing about clothes, my hair as well and transport is always stressing me a lot. (Nolwazi – 19, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019).*

Nolwazi felt like she could not participate in social activities because she did not have the latest fashion trends and could not afford the latest hairstyles to keep up with her peers. Nolwazi said that people in her neighbourhood would make fun of people if they continuously showed up in the same clothes. Nolwazi often kept saying “what will people say?” This indicates how she valued or rather cared about the opinions and thoughts that other people had of her. She spoke strongly about having to fit in and keeping up with the latest trends. On the other hand, Pontso spoke about the importance of “staying in one’s lane” and focusing on the bigger picture. She said the following:

*I learnt then and there when you do not have something because you cannot afford it then you need to leave it alone and not stress yourself over things that you cannot have. Because all you are doing is creating unnecessary pressure. Therefore, I guess I have always just continued with that mentality, that if I cannot afford it, it is then not for me and I should let it go, my time will come when I can afford these things. I mean it is just material things of the world, I found them here and I will leave them here, what is important is my peace of mind. (Pontso - 24, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2019).*

Pontso felt that her financial circumstances just did not allow her to actively partake in the lifestyle activities that her peers often have, as it is beyond her income capacity. Further, she also felt that it would be creating unnecessary pressure for herself to worry about that. Pontso admits to having felt the pressure at times of wanting to fit in with her peers, and participate in social activities in and around her neighbourhood. Similar to this, Sharon also spoke of staying in one's lane and knowing your financial status, and therefore one's limits. In order to do this, Sharon said she consciously and purposefully avoided having friends. This is what she had to say:

*I mean I do not even fit in you know, I cannot go out with them, I do not have the clothes, the hair and money to have friends. Plus, having friends requires you to make time and that creates problems at home. (Sharon - 22, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

For Sharon, not having friends meant not having to spend money she does not have or having to make time she does not have due to her financial status. Mood and Jonsson (2016) describe inclusion into and exclusion from various status groups and social circles as being dependent on one's economic resources. Therefore, based on this explanation, the poor are at risk of losing their status, identity and their friendships. This can be seen with how unemployment and poverty lead or contribute to social isolation (Paugam, 1998 as cited in Mood and Jonsson 2016). Below, Pontso further described how she (like other participants) felt seeing her peers from her neighbourhood progress in their lives whilst she felt stagnate. This is what she said:

*It's like with the people I go to church with. For the longest time I felt so behind compared to them, but then I also started to realise that I am not behind because I am lazy, it is because of my money problems, but I am here now making changes and working towards my future you know and I will be fine as well someday. (Pontso - 24, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2019).*

She felt excluded from her neighbours and former schoolmates who seemed to be progressing in comparison to her since they were enrolled in higher learning institutions or were employed. Some of her peers were even in the process of starting families and building their own homes with their partners. She felt like she was not progressing and that she was running out of time since she was getting older and

entering her late 20s. Unfortunately, by socially excluding oneself, it also affects the chances of gaining access into the labour market as their self-esteem and the way in which they communicate or behave around with people is affected.

#### 4.6 The art of hustling to survive

Survival strategies, as discussed in the literature review, can be either illegal or legal. Furthermore, surviving takes on money forms and strategies, and these vary from individual to individual. What this study found was that the women employed various methods of survival, but none of these were of an illegal nature nor did they put them in direct harm's way of contracting sexual diseases. The most common survival strategy that participants employed (that they did not even consider as a survival strategy) was that of still residing with their family. All the participants resided at home along with other extended family members. This is seen as a survival strategy for many Black households in order to reduce the expenses of cost of living by "*Eating from One Pot*", as the household costs and responsibilities are shared (Mosoetsa 2011).

When analysing the experiences of participants with unemployment and how they survive life post Child Support Grant access, one thing they all shared in common was how they were expected to carry out unpaid work in the household. This involved activities such as cooking, cleaning, laundry and childcare. These feature in their narratives as they are not in the labour market like other family members, and so their contribution in the spirit of "*Eating from One Pot*" comes in the form of domestic responsibilities on behalf of those who work and contribute in monetary terms (Laird 2008). Take for instance Thobeka, whose mother owned a tavern. She was not expected to contribute financially to assist in running the household. Thobeka said the following:

*My mother does not pay me to help sell at her shebeen, my helping out is my contribution.* (Thobeka - 21, 06<sup>th</sup> June 2019).

Thobeka's mother could have easily hired help but however, instead of paying an extra pair of hands and parting with the money, she decided to get her unemployed daughter to help. In so doing, she is not only helping keep her daughter busy but she is also teaching her the business, which Thobeka could someday takeover and run, should anything happen to her mother. This is very similar to some of the experiences



described in 'Class of Soweto', where family members describe how they must take on various roles in their homes in order to make ends meet (Alexander et al., 2013).

Throughout the various interviews, the participants kept referring to the term hustling and that they were either expected to hustle or needed to hustle in order to generate some kind of income to cater for their personal needs as well as those of the household. According to Thieme (2013), hustling is the last resort to which people employ for survivalism to "livelihood strategies". Hustling is also another resort of moving from feelings of being stuck and wanting to better one's living conditions (Thieme 2013). This is what Zozo said about hustling:

*It definitely forced me to make plans and sort of hustle to ensure that I was able to eat and have pocket money and still have money for socials. (Zozo – 20, 06<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

The term hustling is often heard from young individuals when they transition into adulthood and obligations that come with it, whilst failing to meet these expectations (Thieme 2013). What Zozo is essentially saying is that she has had to learn to be responsible and independent and not rely on her parents in order to make decisions for her lifestyle. For her, this meant that she had to learn to be smart with her money and make a few sacrifices to use her money for other commitments such as attending socials with friends. Nolwazi stated that after she completed her grade 12, her mother expected her to maintain herself. This is what she said:

*I did not get any clothes in December after I finished my matric and that is sort of how I knew that she was no longer going to take care of me and that it was time for me to take care of my needs and wants. (Nolwazi - 19, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019).*

Similar to when families help take care of each other's needs through reciprocal care, Nolwazi and her mother did not engage in any formal conversation to say that she now had to maintain herself (Bozalek 1999). Rather, through her actions, Nolwazi's mother indicated that she was no longer responsible for buying her daughter clothes and giving her an allowance. It was time for Nolwazi to be an independent adult and take care of herself, and perhaps to also help out at home. Unlike Nolwazi's mother, Thobeka quoted her mother as having said the following:

*The one time I had ran out of sanitary towels and my mother told me that I was too old to still be running out of sanitary towels and that I need to grow up and learn to think and make a plan. (Thobeka - 21, 06<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

The statement can be interpreted in various ways. For instance, Thobeka's mother could have been simply indicating to her daughter that she needed to be more responsible and to always ensure she had sufficient toiletries. However, Thobeka similar to Zodwa, whose mother had also been quoted to have said something similar, interpreted it to mean that she was old enough to be independent and therefore needed to take care of herself. As a result, hustling can be seen as a response to the nearly impossible task of seeking employment that is legal, well-paying and within the labour market (Venkatesh 2002). Zodwa's hustle was through selling cosmetics in her neighbourhood. She said the following:

*People do not pay on time, and I always had to run after people to pay me. Sometimes they would even disappear and it is exhausting to constantly have to run after people to pay you. Plus, I do not think I was a great sales person because I am too soft on people, so sometimes they would give me stories and I would be understanding and it put me in more debt than before. (Zodwa - 20, 06<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

Taking into consideration that women face inequality the hardest, and that women are considered vulnerable, hustling further places them in more vulnerable situations. For instance, Zodwa hustled through selling cosmetic goods, which required her to go door to door in people's homes that she was not necessarily familiar with. What is more, she sometimes struggled to receive payments from customers. She found herself constantly having to run after and nag customers to pay for the products they had purchased. The forms of hustle that each participant took all came with pros and cons, and these are not activities the participants would ideally be doing, were it not for their financial circumstances.

#### **4.6.1 The chronicles of being young independent Black women**

According to Crain and Kimberly (2011), humans can be described and defined by various relationships, interactions and organizations that they engage in. Humans engage in these various relationships for different reasons. Often these human

relationships are characterised by clearly distinguishing between relationships based on emotions such as passion, love and intimacy and financial gain, such as profit making (Crain and Kimberly 2011). Nolwazi, Nelly and Zodwa were the only participants who shared that they were romantically involved. These three participants stated that these romantic relationships were purely based on emotional investment and that they were not there for financial gain.

As stated, the participants in this study were unemployed and had no stable source of income. However, the participants described themselves as being independent young Black women. Nineteen-year-old Nolwazi, believed that she had reached an age where she was old enough to fend for herself and that her mother cutting her off financially was a way to teach her independence. Nolwazi relied on her boyfriend a great deal financially. She said the following:

*Yea I mean my boyfriend does give me money and when I don't ask for it he checks in to double check if am fine and do not need anything! (Nolwazi - 19, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019).*

Nolwazi no longer depended on her mother to take care of her personal needs and wants, but now depended on her partner to give her money. It is with this money that she caters for her monthly expenses. Although not entirely similar, this can be compared to a study done on university girls who are involved in sugar daddy relationships. They described themselves as independent but however, this independence was based on the dependence on their sugar daddies (Selikow and Mbulaheni 2013). Subsequently, granting that they no longer relied on their caregivers, they had moved on to depending on other people in order to meet their needs and wants. Nelly shared that it was not always easy to ask for money, but because he believed it was his responsibility as her partner, he often made a plan. This is what she said:

*It's almost 3 years so I'm not in it for his money. However, because he is willing to help with this and that. Because in most cases he goes to work, while I stay at home and when he's at work he's wondering who I am with and who's playing his part. (Nelly - 19, 04<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

Nelly depends on her boyfriend to give her money whenever he is able to do so. Taking into consideration that she has been with him for three years; she does not consider herself as being dependent on him or with him for his money. Selikow and Mbulaheni (2013) show that modern girls have been found to invest their love in males who can provide, this love can also include feelings of love and romance. Nelly placed emphasis on the fact that she was there purely for love through speaking of how important it was for her to spend time with her partner. This is similar to the abovementioned study on girls involved with sugar daddies. These girls stated that they were not prostitutes as they were romantically involved with their much older partners and engaged in romantic and thoughtful gestures that represented love and commitment to the relationship (Selikow and Mbulaheni 2013). In the initial stages of the interview, Zodwa had insisted that she was romantically involved with her partner purely because of love. She later shared the following:

*Hell No! I would not even be humble, like that would fly out the window, I definitely would not accept half the things my boyfriend puts me through you know. Because I would have my own money, so what the hell? (Zodwa - 20, 06<sup>th</sup> June 2019).*

When Zodwa shared some frustrations that she had about her partner, she also shared that she felt the need to pick her battles wisely within the relationship. If not, she stood the risk of not getting any money from her partner. Zodwa further shared that she did not think she would have tolerated certain things in the relationship if she was financially independent and had a job, as she would not need her boyfriend. This clearly indicates that although she may not be with him because of his financial status, her reasons for staying are largely motivated by the money she does get from him. Speaking to this is Giddens (1992), who states that in modern society, males find themselves with more options and so do not hesitate to end relationships that no longer satisfy their physical and emotional desires. Whereas females tend to stay longer in relationships that no longer satisfy them on an emotional and physical level, provided that their economic status is maintained or improved within the otherwise unfulfilling relationship. Research also shows that young adults, particularly women have been influenced by financial gain to commit to a relationship in the early stages of a relationship (Mao et al., 2017; Giddens 1992).

## 4.7 Conclusion

Firstly, the chapter began by looking at the various family dynamics that exist in the townships amongst Black families. This was done through providing a narrative of the various family structures identified from the participants. The researcher explored these families' structures in order to provide a clear background of the participants and in order to see how or what influenced their survival strategies post Child Support Grant access. On the theme of families, the chapter continued to further explore the employment statuses within the households and found that the parents of the participants were mostly either unemployed or in unskilled labour. These households depended on various sources of income that were both formal and informal, and included social grants of other family members. More so, older siblings in these households were subjected to Black tax. The chapter also looked at why participants felt like burdens to their families. Feelings of rejection, which affected the self-esteem of participants, emerged as a theme and was discussed as well.

The chapter also looked at the experiences encountered by participants when seeking employment and trying to further their education. These experiences were attributed to the qualifications and skills they did not have, mostly because they were fresh out of secondary school and had never held a job or been to a tertiary institution for various reasons. As a result, participants felt and recollected on opportunities they missed out on. The access to money that participants had was also discussed. More specifically, the chapter looked at how and where participants got money to meet their everyday basics, as they were not employed. Participants felt that they could not actively and fully participate in social activities and this was explored under social exclusion.

This chapter also looked at the experiences that the participants had whilst beneficiaries of the Child Support Grant. What was discovered was that most of the participants did not handle or make decisions about how the money was going to be used and that it was their mothers who made those decisions. What participants shared was how they do wish they were involved in the decision making of where or how their money was spent. Similar to previous studies that have collected data on the experiences of mothers who collect the Child Support Grant on behalf of their children, participants believed that the child grant money was not sufficient but was

nonetheless better than nothing, as it contributed to the greater good of their family members.

Lastly, the chapter explored the survival strategies that participants employed in order to survive life post Child Support Grant access. Along with the challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality faced by young Black women, strategies such as hustling, wanting to further their education and using money sparingly were some of the survival strategies that were discussed.





## **Chapter 5. Conclusion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This study explored the survival strategies of young Black women who were between the ages of 19-25. These women were all previous beneficiaries of the Child Support Grant. The participants were all unemployed and were not enrolled in any tertiary institution as a result of either not having the required marks or the funds to do so. In exploring the experiences of these ten young Black women from a township called Daveyton, the researcher wanted to analyse how their actual lives were when they received the grant. This is because most studies have focused on the experiences of the mothers and guardians who collect the grant on behalf the beneficiaries.

The study found that the majority of the participants had no say in how the money was spent in their homes, as these decisions were taken by the primary care givers. This made sense, as the Act clearly states that in as much as the children are the beneficiaries, their primary caregivers are responsible for making the decisions. The participants agreed that the money was distributed in such a manner that it not only benefited them but the entire household. However, a small minority of the participants were given the freedom of deciding what to do with their grant money. With this so-called freedom, participants who received their grant money were expected to either cover their school transport costs, plait their hair or purchase toiletries for themselves. Although the participants spoke to the fact that the amount paid out monthly to beneficiaries was not sufficient, they all agreed that the void of not receiving the money anymore was felt.

The study argued that the difficulties faced by participants in finding employment were due to the scarcity of jobs, lack of work experience and skills as well as not having any qualifications required for most of the jobs. Because participants were not employed or enrolled in any tertiary institutions, they were required to take on unpaid care work in their households. The study argued that this was an expected societal norm because of the gender of the participants and the roles they are expected to take on as young Black women who are unemployed, as they are considered to be essentially available to take on caregiving chores within the household. This speaks to how gender inequality, and unemployment promotes poverty in women.

The results of the study continued to show that the types of families that the participants came from played a huge role in the manner in which the participants went about making ends meet in order to survive. For instance, participants came from extended, nuclear, absent father households, and single headed households. The study found that within these families, it was an unspoken conversation to cut the participants off financially as they were at an age where a woman had to allegedly make a plan to survive financially. All the participants interpreted this differently.

## **5.2 Summary of chapters**

Chapter one of this study provided an overall introduction to the study. This was done through looking at the background of the study. Further, the chapter identified the gaps in literature and how the study aimed to explore those gaps. Evidently, it can be seen in the chapter that young Black women post Child Support Grant access are prone to experiencing gender inequality, unemployment and not being able to gain access to tertiary institutions. It can also be seen in this chapter that young Black women have not given up and still aspire to further their education at a tertiary level to increase their chances of skilled employment. The overall purpose of this chapter was to provide a brief background of the study. This was through looking at the aims and objectives, which provides for an indication as to what the study will do.

More specifically, the chapter looks at how literature has mostly focused on mothers and guardians who collect the grant on behalf of their children. A reason for this could be because most children are still under the care and supervision of their mothers and these mothers are most often responsible for making the household decisions. So naturally they would decide how best to use the grant money for the greater good of the entire household and not just the beneficiary. Hence the study looked to explore life post Child Support Grant access and the survival strategies taken by these young participants because regardless of their employment status or beneficiary status they are still expected to make ends meet in order to survive financially.

Chapter two critically reviewed literature that exists in regards to the study. Specifically, the chapter assessed how poverty, gender inequality as well as unemployment remain huge social problems in South Africa. The chapter also looks into why and how Black women are so heavily impacted by the social problems

mentioned. Family dynamics were briefly discussed and it was found that due to the injustices of the apartheid system, many Black families do not represent the western idea of what a family should look like. Most Black families opt to live in extended families as this helps them save money and can be seen as a survival strategy that all participants have unconsciously put into practice.

Literature on the social security system suggests that it has been put in place in order to mitigate the injustices of apartheid that is poverty, inequality and unemployment. The chapter also looks at the limitations of the social security system, drawing mostly to the limitations of the child grant and how it is inadequate to effectively meet the needs and wants of a growing child in the 21st century. The chapter continued to look at survival strategies that various literatures write about that women use to survive various social circumstances. Lastly, the Black Feminist Approach was reviewed as a theoretical framework for this study and what role it played in helping young Black women narrate their experiences.

Chapter three discussed the methodology used in the study. A qualitative methodological approach was used in this study to explore the survival strategies of young Black women post Child Support Grant access. When collecting data of the narrated experiences the researcher used face to face semi-structured interviews. All these interviews took place in the East Rand of Johannesburg from January to June 2019. When selecting the ten participants the researcher used both purposive and snowball sampling methods. Thematic content analysis, which is the process of making sense of collected from the interviews into similar themes in order to effectively assess was used in this study to critically analyse the content of the interviews. Participation was voluntary and participants were provided with an information sheet and consent form in which they had to sign once they had read and understood the content.

The chapter also narrates the researcher's experiences and feelings throughout the study and during the interviews through reflexivity. Besides being a young Black woman the researcher did not anticipate to have anything in common with the participants. The researcher could relate and understand some of the difficulties with wanting to further one's education. Additionally, research often requires the researcher to remain detached from their participants; however, that is not the case for the

researcher. Whom because of the Black Feminist Approach she was expected to become a personal part of the research project and not set boundaries.

Chapter four is based on the experiences of the participants and further linked them to the literature used in chapter two. The main argument in this chapter is that the survival strategies of these young Black women are largely influenced by their family backgrounds and dynamics, their abilities to seek employment and further their education. One thing is certain, the participants wanted more from their lives and had plans to improve their current circumstances for a better life. As a result of the participants being unemployed and essentially not having anything to do with their time, they were expected to take on the unpaid care work in the household. Doing unpaid care work in the house takes away from one's time, which could be used in gaining skills and applying for work.

Because of the unpaid work the participants were engaged in they struggle to access money on a regular basis, which affected their ability to go into town from their township to seek work. Furthermore, they struggled to access the internet café on a regular basis to look for work and print out their CV's. Whenever the participants managed to go job hunting they were often faced with a lot of rejection as they did not meet the requirements as they had no qualifications, experience or skills needed to enter the workspace. Participants shared how having to watch their peers progress in life and attain employment, qualifications and starting their own families put immense pressure on them and negatively affected their self-esteem. Participants also avoided engaging in social activities in their communities as they dreaded having to answer questions on why they were either not working or in school. The participants also seemed to avoid social spaces they did not have the latest fashion trends expected in such spaces.

As previously stated most scholars have focused on the experiences of the mothers and guardians of the Child Support Grant beneficiaries, which is why this chapter took a look at the experiences that the intended beneficiaries had with the Child Support Grant. Participants mostly spoke to having wished they had more of a say in how their mothers or guardians used their money, some wished that they were given their money so that they could spoil themselves with material things. None of them had ever felt brave enough to ask for their money as they believed they had no right to make

such demands as children. Which was true, it would have been out of place and seen as disrespectful if they had made such demands. Only one participant attested to her mother having used her grant money recklessly and how she felt she never benefitted from it.

This minor dissertation has shown the many ways in which young Black women employ as survival strategies. Some of these strategies were not even seen as being strategies for the participants but were things they did because it was expected of them as young Black women who are not in school nor working. The chapter also showed how family dynamics play a huge role in the pressure the participants felt in seeking employment as they were financially cut off and expected to make ends meet regardless.

The chapter also shows how the participants struggled with getting the necessary qualifications and funds to further their education. Participants also struggled in finding work as a result of not having access to resources such as the internet and residing in the township, which does not hold many job opportunities worked to their disadvantage as they were required to travel into town to look for work and that needs money, which they do not have.

### **5.3 Concluding of remarks**

The study concludes that young Black women face poverty, inequality and unemployment differently and also use various strategies to survive. This could be attributed to factors that include their family dynamics as well as financial circumstances. As seen in the experiences shared by participants, support from family plays a huge role in the decisions that participants make. Furthermore, their geographical locations have also played a role in how they think, function and in the opportunities they are exposed to and are able to participate in. This study has shown us that perhaps the Child Support Grant needs to reconsider its entire policy and ensure that it adequately equips its beneficiaries before they are taken off the system. These findings have helped the researcher in answering the research question and study objectives, through a critical analysis of the survival strategies of young Black women post Child Support Grant access.

Using the Black feminist perspective the researcher was able to see that indeed the experiences of Black women are different from other races. What is more, the experiences narrated by the participants were not the same, despite similarities shared in their family dynamics and other factors. The study was able to identify the various survival strategies used by participants post grant access. These included, living at home, depending on family members and romantic relationships for financial assistance, performing care work as well as taking on piece jobs. In addition, it is worth noting that post grant access affects its beneficiaries differently although to an extent most of them had similar experiences regarding life after being beneficiaries. This included seeking work and attempting to further their education and the amount of support given to them by family members through this transition in their lives.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The overall study was able to identify the survival strategies that young Black women post-Child Support Grant have taken on in order to survive financially. However, there is a need for the social security system, more specially the Child Support Grant to review some of its policies and terms and conditions. The beneficiaries of the Child Support Grant would benefit a great deal if after school or school holiday programmes were made compulsory to all beneficiaries to attend. These programmes would address various aspects that help promote growth and development. For instance, from grade 9, beneficiaries could attend career workshops that could then help them choose the correct subjects to take up. In grade 10, the beneficiaries can also attend workshops that equip them with knowledge on applying at tertiary institutions and for bursaries and scholarships. In grade 11 and 12 they can attend workshops that provide them with job hunting skills as well as CV writing and interview skills. It is not enough to just give beneficiaries a small amount of money and not follow up with their growth and development.

In connection with the above, another recommendation is to conduct a quantitative study to explore the experiences of Child Support Grant beneficiaries post grant access on a larger scale. This would help provide for specific and targeted workshops that will help various beneficiaries from around the country. In so doing, a quantitative study will allow for comparisons to be made across provinces, gender and various age



groups and ethnicities. Lastly, quantitative findings could have a better chance of influencing policy change as they can be generalised to a larger population.

Lastly, it is recommended that the Child Support Grant review the age at which it stops supporting beneficiaries. At 18, most beneficiaries are still in secondary school in either grade 11 and 12. Unless of course if for whatever reason the beneficiaries have opted to quit school before 18 then they can be forfeited from being beneficiaries.



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## Appendixes

### Appendix A: Participation Information Sheet



#### **Information Letter Research Ethics Committee**

Dear Potential Participant

Please read the information below carefully and ask any questions you may have about it before completing the consent form.

My name is Zinzile Ramatseba and I am currently an MA student at the University of Johannesburg in the department of Sociology. I would like to ask you to participate in a research project on - ***What are the survival strategies of young Black unemployed women without access to social security support post- child grant access?***

The purpose of this research is to examine how young unemployed Black women between the ages of 18-25, who are previous beneficiaries of the child social grant are surviving financially without any access to social grants. Participation is voluntary. That means that you do not have to participate. You can even stop before the project is finished without any penalty. If you agree to participate, I will interview you in a safe place. The interview will take approximately 1 hour to 1 hour 45 minutes and if you allow it the interview will be recorded with your given consent.

Your identity will be protected at all times. I will do this by removing your identifying details out of the interviews and research project as a whole, you will be referred to as participant “?”. The recordings will be stored in a locked cupboard and no one else but my supervisor and I will have access to them. I undertake not to hide anything from you concerning your participation and the potential harm, discomfort, stress it may cause.

If participation in this project causes you any emotional, physical, or mental discomfort, I will end our session at that very moment, and continue at a later stage if you decide to partake again. The consent form will be kept separate from all other documentation and will be in a locked cupboard to which only Zinzile Ramatseba (I) have access. The results of the study will be utilized for the researcher’s mini dissertation and other academic publications.

If you have read this document and understand what is expected of you, please consider participating in this research. If you are willing to do this, please sign the consent form.

Kind regards

Zinzile Ramatseba

Contact Details of Supervisor: Prof Grace Khunou @ [gracek@uj.ac.za](mailto:gracek@uj.ac.za).

Contact Details of Researcher: Zinzile Ramatseba

## Appendix B: Consent Letter



### ***Consent Letter***

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I agree to participate in the research project conducted by Zinzile Ramatseba.

1. I have read and understood the information given to me about this project.
2. I have had opportunities to ask questions and have received all the information I need.
3. I understand that I will not receive anything for participating.
4. I also understand that I may withdraw at any time without any penalties.
5. I agree to be interviewed (please mark all applicable boxes)

B	Individually
C	For the interview to be recorded

6. I understand that I can ask for help if the research project causes me any distress.
7. I choose to have the following pseudo name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C: Interview Guide

### Interview Guide



### Information Sheet

To whom it may concern

I would like to extend an invitation to you to participate in a study that I am currently undertaking as part of my Master's Degree in Social Impact Assessment (under Sociology).

**About the study:** The intention of this proposed study is to examine what happens to young Black women after the age of 18 when they suddenly have to exit the social security system. There seems to be a lack of research on how young Black women who are unemployed and are not beneficiaries of social grant system either as child receipts or as mothers claiming for their children. Most research has tended to focus on mothers who are child grant recipients.

**Aim:** This study aims to explore how young unemployed black women between the ages of 18-25, without children and are previous beneficiaries of the social grant system are surviving financially without any access to social grant system, higher education and wage work.

**Research Question:** What are the survival strategies of young Black unemployed women without access to social security support post- child grant access?

#### **Main objectives of the study:**

- Explore the experiences of young Black women who no longer have access to the child grant.
- Determine the coping mechanisms that young Black women use to deal with income insecurity.
- Recommend possible solutions on how social security can fill the gap in assisting and empowering young Black women to break the cycle of poverty.

### **Why have you been invited to participate?**

You are invited to partake in this study as you are a young black female between the ages of 18-25 years who has been a beneficiary of the Child Social Grant.

### **What is expected of you as a participant?**

If you agree to partake in this study as a volunteer, you will be required to participant in a sit-down one on one interview for approximately one hour.

### **What is it in for you?**

This study may not benefit you directly. However, it will provide you with a platform to share your experiences and survival strategies as a young black woman who no longer has access to social grant access.

### **Risk factors of partaking in this study?**

This research study could lead to emotional discomfort. In such a case the participant will be referred to the nearest place within their access to seek counselling if they wish. Furthermore, participants are free to withdraw from the study at any given moment if they wish to.

### **How much will this cost you?**

This study is voluntary, which means that participants will not be paid to partake, nor will it cost them to partake in this study.

### **Who will have access to the participants' interviews?**

As participants your identity will be protected at all times and will be kept confidential. This means that only myself (the researcher) and my supervisor (Professor Grace Khunou) will have access to the data collected through the interviews I will be conducting. The audio-records and notes taken will be kept in a locked cupboard that only myself and the supervisor will have access to. Furthermore, the electronic documents pertaining the participant's data will be kept secure as a password is required to access my laptop where I will be keeping them. The researcher will attempt to ensure that your identity is protected throughout the study and that your

confidentiality is secure. The data collected will be used towards my research for Masters.

For further information or clarification please do not hesitate to contact me @ [201326625@student.uj.ac.za](mailto:201326625@student.uj.ac.za) or alternatively my supervisor Professor Grace Khunou @ [gracek@uj.ac.za](mailto:gracek@uj.ac.za)

### SECTION A: Biographical Information

1. Age

.....

2. Marital status?

Marital Status	Tick X
Divorced	
Married	
Separated	
Single	
Widowed	

3. . What is your highest level of education?

Level of Education	Please Specify
Primary School (Grade 1-7)	
Secondary School (Grade 8-12)	
Technical Diploma/ College Certificate	
University Degree	

Other Post School Qualification	
---------------------------------	--

#### 4. Home Language

Language	Tick X
Afrikaans	
English	
IsiNdebele	
IsiXhosa	
IsiZulu	
Sepedi	
Sesotho	
Setswana	
Swati	
Tsonga	
Venda	

5. Are you currently employed? If so, specify what job you currently have

.....

6. What sources of income do you have?

.....



7. Where do you currently reside?

.....

8. With whom do you reside with?

.....

9. Are you required to contribute money to reside there?

.....

10. What contributions do you make where you reside?

.....

11. What are your monthly expenses?

.....

**SECTION B: Open Ended Questions (Please note: This session will be recorded)**

- **Explore the experiences of young Black women who no longer have access to the child grant.**

1. What was your financial situation like when you were a beneficiary of the child grant?

2. What do you think were the benefits of being a beneficiary of the child grant?

3. What do you think were the negatives/ disadvantages of being a beneficiary of the child grant?
  4. How has not being a beneficiary of the child social grant affected you as a young Black woman?
  5. Describe your financial situation now that you are no longer a beneficiary of the child grant?
  6. What were the experiences that you face when wanting to further your education?
  7. What are the experiences that you face when seeking employment?
- **Determine the coping mechanisms that young Black women use to deal with income insecurity.**
    1. How do you meet your monthly expenses on a monthly basis?
    2. What are experiences that you face as a young black unemployed black female?
    3. How have those experiences affected you as individual?
    4. What are some of your coping mechanisms of dealing with unemployment as a young Black woman?
    5. How sustainable are your coping mechanisms in dealing with income insecurity in both the short and long term?
    6. Have you had to make any sacrifices in order to deal with income insecurity?
  - **Recommend possible solutions on how social security can fill the gap in assisting and empowering young Black women to break the cycle of poverty.**
    1. What do you think government can do to help young black women in breaking the cycle of poverty?
    2. How can the social security system assist in preventing young Black women who were previous beneficiaries of the grant from falling into the cycle of poverty?
    3. How can the social security system prevent previous beneficiaries from them not having to collect social grants for their own children in the future?
    4. How do you think young Black women can empower themselves in order to break the cycle of poverty?
    5. Is there anything else you would like to add?



## FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

### RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

02 October 2018

<b>ETHICAL CLEARANCE NUMBER</b>	<b>REC-01-00118-2018</b>
<b>REVIEW OUTCOME</b>	Approved
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Ramatseba Z
<b>TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT</b>	Exploring the Survival Strategies of Black Unemployed Women without Access to Social Grants
<b>DEPARTMENT</b>	Sociology
<b>SUPERVISOR/S</b>	Prof G Khunou

Dear Ramatseba Z;

The Faculty of Humanities Research Ethics Committee has scrutinised your research proposal and confirm that it complies with the approved ethical standards of the Faculty of Humanities; University of Johannesburg. We have made some recommendations, set out below, for your consideration in consultation with your supervisors.

#### Recommendations:

- The candidate may amend the consent form and information sheet to reflect her ability to refer respondents to additional help.
- Edit the proposal.

The REC would like to extend their best wishes to you with your postgraduate studies.

Yours sincerely,

**Prof Grace Khunou**

Chair: Faculty of Humanities REC

Tel: 011 559 3346

Email: gracek@uj.ac.za